



# COCO BOLO

KING OF THE FLOATING ISLANDS

SIDFORD F. HAMP















COCO BOLO







OTTO  
HOPP

*Up the garden ran the King*

# COCO BOLO

King of the Floating Islands

SIDFORD F. HAMP



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COCO BOLO  
KING OF THE FLOATING ISLANDS



# Coco Bolo

## CHAPTER I

### THE SHADOW-CHASERS

“**E**DWARD can’t come,” said Margaret: “he’d get tired too soon and want to go home again.”

“No, Edward can’t come,” Frances agreed. “His legs are too short. We must wait till he goes upstairs for his nap, and then we’ll start.”

There were three children in the family: Margaret, who was nearly eight; Frances, who was six and a quarter; and Edward, who, being only half way between three and four, was still—as Frances had sagely remarked—too short in the legs for such an enterprise as the two little girls had in mind.

They had been spending the winter on the coast of Southern California, when, one morning in April, Margaret and Frances went out into the road in front of the house, and turning their backs to the sun, amused themselves by running after their shadows, trying to step on their own heads—a feat they had often attempted before, but never yet with any success.

## COCO BOLO

While they were thus occupied, their father, coming out of the house, stood on the edge of the sidewalk watching them, and when the two children, touselled and breathless, presently came back to him, he put an arm round the shoulders of each, saying:

“What are you doing, Chicks? Chasing shadows?”

“Yes, Daddy.” It was Margaret who replied. “We were trying to get to the other end—”

“So’s we could tread on our own heads,” said Frances, who never liked to be left out of the conversation.

“Ah! A difficult thing to do. Nobody ever succeeded yet that I know of except little Tom Titmouse, and very much surprised he was when he got there.”

“Why?” asked both children, with eager anticipation, scenting a story.

“Be-cause,” replied their father, spreading out the word in order to give himself time to think. “Be-cause—But it’s too long a story to tell you now, children, for I must leave in a minute. So the story must wait till this evening—unless you should manage to catch your shadows before I get home again, and then *you* can tell *me* whether it is all true or not.”

## THE SHADOW-CHASERS

“Whether what is all true, Daddy?” asked Margaret.

“Why, all those things that Tommy Titmouse saw: King Coco Bolo and the Archbishop and Lobsterneck, the Great American Snap-dragon, and—but I must go, children. I must be off. Good-bye! There’s my car coming now.”

So saying, Daddy ran to the street corner, and there, with a wave of his hand, he vanished, leaving the two little girls standing before the front gate, thinking.

“We’ll try this morning,” said Margaret with decision. “We’ll start just as soon as Edward goes upstairs for his nap.”

Accordingly, the moment Edward’s short legs had conveyed him unwillingly to bed, the two little girls went out at the back gate to where a large open stretch of land sloped gently down to the ocean, about half a mile away. A few trees were scattered here and there upon the slope, and between them, far out upon the water, might be seen some bare, rocky islands, with the sight of which the children were familiar—*islands where nobody lived and to which nobody ever went.*

Margaret was a rather tall little girl, with brown eyes and brown hair and red cheeks, while Frances,

## COCO BOLO

who was not quite so tall, had light hair and hazel eyes and pink cheeks, as well as a band of freckles all across her nose. Both of them were wearing that morning their pink dresses and flowered hair-ribbons—a very fortunate circumstance, as it turned out. Margaret also wore a wide-brimmed straw hat, while her sister carried instead a pink-and-white parasol—one of her last birthday presents. She took with her as well another of her birthday presents: a yellow plush puppy with black spots, Periwinkle by name, whose legs were like sausages, whose eyes were glittering black beads, and whose red worsted mouth was set in a perpetual smile.

Thus equipped, the children set forth, and turning their backs to the sun and their faces to the ocean, they walked after their shadows, steadily and briskly, though without haste.

“For,” said Frances, “the way to do is not to hurry. That is what Daddy said that day we walked to the old wreck. He said, ‘Take it easy and keep going,’ and we did and we got there.”

“Yes,” responded her sister. “Daddy always knows; so we won’t hurry; and then we shan’t get so hot either.”

It was hot enough, though, hurry or no hurry, for the morning was unusually sultry. The sun beat

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*Shadow chasing*



## THE SHADOW-CHASERS

down upon them, the ground was steaming and the air was all in a quiver; and what was worse, though they kept on walking and walking, they seemed to get no nearer to the other end of their shadows. It was rather discouraging.

They were persevering little girls, however, and knowing how pleased Daddy would be to learn whether it really was true about Coco Bolo and the Archbishop and Lobsterneck, the Great American Snap-Dragon, they kept on and on, growing more tired and more hot and more discouraged at every step—especially Frances, who had the puppy to carry—when, without their having noticed what had become of them, their shadows suddenly disappeared!

On the brink of a steep little cliff about six feet high, at the foot of which the waters of a small inlet gently lapped the rocks, there stood a grove of ten or twelve trees—short, stubby trees, all leaning landward, as trees growing on the edge of the sea always do. The shadows led the children straight to this grove of trees, and there, lo and behold! they vanished. Where had they got to?

Margaret and Frances looked all about. They looked upon the ground and they looked up into the trees, but look where they might no shadows could

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they see. Where *had* they got to?

"I wonder," said Frances, "if this isn't the place where Tommy—Tommy—what was his other name?"

"Little Tom Titmouse," replied her sister. "Perhaps it is. So let us sit down and wait. Perhaps, if we sit still and keep quiet, we may see King Coco Bolo and the Archbishop and—Are there such things as tame dragons, Frances?" she asked, suddenly remembering with some misgivings that little Tom Titmouse, besides making the desirable acquaintance of King Coco Bolo and the Archbishop, had also encountered a dragon—which was quite another thing.

"There must be," replied Frances, reflectively. "Daddy told us to try to get to that place, and if the dragon hadn't been a tame dragon he wouldn't—"

"No, of course he wouldn't," interrupted Margaret, reassured. "So we'll sit down and wait, and perhaps—Oh! Look!" pointing out over the shimmering sea. "There are some new islands! One, two, three of them, besides the old ones. Look! Oh! One of them has split in two! Now there are four! Now there are five! What funny islands!"

Sitting in the cool shade of the trees, the children watched the new islands come and go, grow large

## THE SHADOW-CHASERS

and larger, break in two, vanish and come again. It was very fascinating and also very mysterious. How did they get there? Where had they come from? And why, Oh, why did they keep shifting about like that? Were they floating islands? It seemed likely, for Daddy had once told them something about floating islands with flower gardens on them, though where they were situated Margaret could not remember.

"I shouldn't be a bit s'prised"—she began, when, turning to her sister, she noticed that an ant was running over the back of Frances' hand. Knowing very well that Frances objected to the tickling of ants and spiders and such things, Margaret glanced quickly at her face, and then smiled a superior smile.

"She's so young," said she, by way of explaining it. "She's only six and a quarter. It isn't as if she was nearly eight. I won't disturb her. I'll let her sleep just as long as she likes."

Observing that the yellow plush puppy was lying on his back with his feet in the air, she went on:

"I may just as well lie down too while I'm waiting. I'll put Periwinkle on this flat stone: he'll make a very good pillow. Ah! How nice it is here under the trees. I wish the branches would keep still, though, so that the sunlight wouldn't keep flicking

## COCO BOLO

into my eyes. I'll put my hat over my face, and then—Yes, that's better. Now, I'll just shut my eyes and wait till Frances—”

*“Ting-a-ling-a-ling!”*

Margaret had not had her eyes shut one minute—no, not half a minute, she was sure—when she heard the sound of a little bell somewhere close by. She sat bolt upright and listened, while Periwinkle, who had been uncomplainingly serving her as a pillow, the valiant Periwinkle sprang up on his sausage legs and began to growl fiercely—as fiercely, that is to say, as was to be expected of a yellow plush puppy with a fixed red worsted smile.

*“Ting-a-ling-a-ling!”* went the bell again. The sound seemed to come up from the edge of the water at the foot of the cliff. Margaret jumped up, and followed by Periwinkle she stepped softly to the edge of the rocks and peeped over.

## CHAPTER II

### ADMIRAL BOXWOOD

**S**TANDING on a flat shelf of rock which rose about six inches above the level of the water was a little man, who, from the cut of his clothes, was evidently a naval man. He looked so smart that Margaret made sure he must be an admiral at least, though instead of the blue cloth suit of an ordinary, every day admiral, this little man wore a bright green cocked hat with a long red tassel on the top of it; a gold-laced swallow-tailed coat of cherry-colored silk; green-and-white striped knee breeches; white silk stockings; and white shoes with cherry-colored rosettes. Altogether he was very bright and pretty to look at.

But the most remarkable thing about him was his size.

“He’s just about as tall as Mother’s new, long-handled parasol,” thought Margaret. “And yet he isn’t a boy, for he has gray hair and gray whiskers. What red cheeks he has, too: they’re just as red as Edward’s new doll’s were before he washed them

## COCO BOLO

in the bath-tub with the nail brush. I wonder why he keeps on ringing that bell. He must be waiting for somebody.”

If he was waiting for somebody, he was not worrying himself much about it, for he was standing in a careless attitude with his feet crossed, and instead of looking out for the people to come, his eyes were fixed on a little silver bell which, holding it out at arm's length between his finger and thumb, he kept tinkling and tinkling as though he had nothing else in the world to do; all the time smiling away to himself in the most cheerful and contented manner.

Margaret took a step forward, when her shadow—that very same shadow she had been vainly pursuing all morning—her shadow fell on the rock at the little man's feet. He looked up, and instantly his whole manner changed. He stopped ringing his bell, and clapping his heels together he made a bow so low that the red tassel on his hat swept the ground.

“If your Royal Highness is ready—” he began, when Margaret interrupted him.

“My—my what, did you say?” she asked. “I didn't quite understand. My sister, do you mean? I'll call her.”

Turning to do so, she found that Frances, whom she had left asleep under the trees, was standing

## ADMIRAL BOXWOOD

close beside her holding her hand—and the curious thing about it was that she was not in the least surprised.

“Isn’t he pretty!” whispered Frances. “What red cheeks he has! What was he saying to you? Let’s go down and talk to him. Shall we?”

The two little girls, after hunting about for a bit, found an easy place to climb down, when they advanced toward the little man, followed by Periwinkle, who, being not quite easy in his mind, kept close at their heels, growling to himself all the time in an undertone.

As they approached him, the Admiral greeted them with another low bow, lower even than the first one. In fact, he bowed so very low that his joints creaked and then stuck. Do what he would he could not straighten up again.

“Oh, dear!” cried Margaret. “He’s caught somehow. Come and help me, Frances.”

So saying, she picked up the little Admiral and held him close against her with both arms around his chest. In this position his feet stuck straight out in front of him, when Frances, taking hold of his ankles, pressed them down until he came straight again with a snap.

“Your Royal Highnesses are most condescend-

## COCO BOLO

ing," said the polite little Admiral gratefully, bowing once more, though this time with greater caution. "The fact is," he went on to explain, "I had the misfortune to fall into the sea yesterday and my joints became swollen in consequence."

"What!" cried Frances. "Does it make your joints swell if you—?"

But here the Admiral interrupted her.

"I don't wonder you are surprised," said he, with a gratified smile. "I know it must seem strange to you to be told that even we, Hardwoods—"

"You are a Hardwood, then, are you?" asked Margaret in a polite tone of inquiry. For, while she did not understand what the little Admiral meant by calling himself a Hardwood, she did not wish to appear too inquisitive.

"I have that honor," replied the Admiral. "In fact, all the officers of the army and navy are Hardwoods, as well as all the members of the Court circle, with the single exception of the Court Crier. He belongs to the Weeping Willow family. But as I was going to say," he went on, "even a Hardwood will swell if he stays in the water nine hours, as I did."

"Nine hours!" cried Frances. "Why, we only stay in twenty minutes twice a week, when we have



*Picked up the little Admiral*



## ADMIRAL BOXWOOD

our swimming lesson. What did you stay in so long for?"

"It was not intentional, I beg to assure you," replied the Admiral. "Far from it. I fell into the sea, and as the tide was going out at the time I had to go with it; and when it did turn and washed me back again, I couldn't find the island."

"The island! What island?" asked Frances.

The little man cocked up his eyebrows in surprise at the question.

"What island?" he repeated. "Why, the Floating Island, of course," pointing over his shoulder with his thumb.

"Oh! So you come from the Floating Islands, do you!" exclaimed Margaret.

"Yes. You will have noticed, I dare say, how the islands keep coming and going and breaking in pieces and changing their shapes. Well, that is what they did yesterday, and every time I thought I was going to land I found that the island had moved away and I had to begin all over again."

"That was horrid," remarked Frances. "Weren't you afraid of being drowned?"

At this question the little Admiral, in spite of his politeness, could not help laughing.

"Drowned!" he cried. "We, Hardwoods, don't

## COCO BOLO

get drowned. Why, the Lord Chancellor was washed off the island once and floated about for three months. We all thought he was gone for good, but he turned up again one day none the worse except that his joints wouldn't work for a couple of weeks and nearly all his paint had washed off."

"His paint!" cried Margaret, glancing at the little man's red cheeks. "What is he made of, then?"

"He is one of the Quartered-Oaks—written with a hyphen—a very good family, very hard and very serviceable; though—Ahem!—not *quite* of such quality as the Boxwoods."

He said this with such a self-conscious air that Margaret ventured a guess.

"You are a—"

The little man laid his right hand on his heart, stuck out his left elbow and bent his body at the hips. With his eyes half closed and with a beaming smile, he said:

"Your Royal Highness has guessed right. I am of the Boxwoods."

"And the Boxwoods are harder than the Quartered Oaks, are they?" asked Margaret.

By way of reply, the little Admiral picked up a pebble and tapped himself on the cheek with it. It sounded like clapping the backs of two hair-brushes

## ADMIRAL BOXWOOD

together.

“Why!” exclaimed Frances. “You are as hard as—as hard as a door-knob!”

The little man was evidently much pleased with the compliment. Becoming confidential, he stepped forward and said in a low tone:

“Between ourselves, Ladies, the Boxwood family is the hardest on the island. Nobody disputes our position; we come next to the King, himself.”

“The King!” cried both children, inquiringly.

“His Majesty, King Coco Bolo,” replied the little Admiral, drawing himself up very straight and lifting his cocked hat as high as his short arm would permit.

“But, bless my paint and spangles!” he cried. “What am I thinking of? Here have I been chattering away, forgetting all the time what I came for.”

So saying, he removed his cocked hat again and took out of the lining a large, square letter, which he handed to Margaret; and having done so, he retired a few steps, where he stood with his arms a-kimbo and his head on one side, smiling away at nothing. “Just as if he had been taking lessons in cheerfulness and was practising while he waited,” thought Frances.

The two children, with their heads close together,

## COCO BOLO

each holding a corner of the envelope, spelt out the address. It read:

“To Margaret and Frances. Courtesy of Admiral Boxwood.”

“Then he *is* an Admiral,” whispered Margaret, peeping over the top of the envelope at the smiling little gentleman. “That’s why he wears a cocked hat and is so polite.”

“What does it mean by saying, ‘Courtesy of Admiral Boxwood’?” asked Frances. “Do you think they made a mistake and meant to say ‘Courtesy *to* Admiral Boxwood’?”

“Perhaps they did,” replied Margaret. “Anyhow, it’s better to be too polite than not polite enough, so let’s courtesy to him.”

Standing up side by side and holding out their frocks with both hands, the two little girls made their very best “cheeses” to the Admiral; upon which the Admiral took off his cocked hat with a flourish and bowed, until the squeaking of his joints warned him to straighten up again.

“What is the letter about?” asked Margaret, turning it over and over. “Here’s a big ‘C. B. R.’ on the back, done in red letters with a gold crown over them. What does C. B. R. mean?”

“Coco Bolo Rex,” replied the Admiral, adding:

## ADMIRAL BOXWOOD

“Rex, you know, means King.”

“Oh, I see. Thank you. No, I didn’t know. But what is the King writing to us for?”

“Perhaps your Royal Highness had better read the letter and see,” replied the Admiral—which really did seem like a very sensible suggestion.

“I’m not very good at reading writing yet,” said Margaret, as she drew the letter from the envelope, “but—Oh! It’s printed in capital letters. That’s easier. It looks like a bill of fare. I’ll see if I can read it.

‘COCO BOLO  
KING OF THE FLOATING ISLANDS  
PRESENTS HIS COMPLIMENTS  
TO  
MARGARET AND FRANCES  
AND  
REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF THEIR  
COMPANY  
AT A GARDEN PARTY  
TO MEET  
HIS GRACE, THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF  
TIMBUCTOO-AND-A-HALF’ ”

“Oh, what fun!” cried Frances, clapping her

## COCO BOLO

hands and dancing about. "A garden party! How kind of the King to ask us! Let's go, Margaret."

"Yes, it's very kind of the King; and I should like to go, of course," replied her sister; "but how are we to get there?"

"Nothing easier," remarked the Admiral. "His Majesty is not one to do things by halves. He has sent the royal yacht for your accommodation."

He waved his hand toward the water, where the two little girls noticed for the first time that a boat was gently bobbing up and down upon the swell.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ROYAL YACHT

**I**T was a very pretty boat, evidently made of glass, for the children could see right through it; and though it had neither mast nor oars, it had, at any rate, a wheel, behind which was standing a little man dressed in a sailor's suit of the same bright colors as the Admiral's.

"The Crew," remarked that gentleman, nodding toward the new sailor-man, who, as soon as he saw that the little girls were looking at him, smiled in the most cordial manner and spun the wheel round so fast that the spokes hummed in the air.

"If you are quite ready," said the Admiral, raising his hat, "we'll get aboard;" and stepping down to the edge of the water he put his hands to his mouth and roared out at the very top of his voice: "Boat, ahoy!" Though, really, it seemed hardly necessary to shout so loud, as the boat was not more than four feet from the shore.

"Perhaps the Crew is deaf," suggested Frances, sagely.

## COCO BOLO

Perhaps he was, but, if so, he was not so deaf but that he could hear what was shouted to him at four feet distance, for he at once touched his cap, spun the wheel round the other way, and leaving it spinning walked to the bow of the boat, where, leaning out over the water, he pulled up a little anchor.

“Weigh the anchor!” shouted the Admiral.

“Do you think it’s worth while?” suggested the Crew, politely touching his cap. “We’ve weighed it once this morning already—four pounds, six ounces.”

“That’s true. Well, never mind, then. Pitch it ashore.”

Thereupon, the Crew, holding the coil of rope in his left hand, swung the anchor round and round his head and threw it to the Admiral.

Instead of catching it in his hands, or getting out of its way altogether, as most people would have done, and as the children of course thought he would do, the Admiral whipped off his cocked hat and bending forward allowed the anchor to hit him crack on the top of his head.

“Oh!” cried both little girls, running forward. “Did it hurt you very badly?”

“Not at all, thank you,” replied the Admiral with a genial smile, as he stooped to pick up the anchor.

OTTO  
HOPP



*Allowed the anchor to hit him*



## THE ROYAL YACHT

“A little thing like that doesn’t hurt a Boxwood.”

So saying, he began to pull upon the rope, drawing the boat close up to the shore, when he remarked:

“Now, your Royal Highnesses, if you’ll step aboard we’ll start at once.”

“Why do you keep on calling us ‘Royal Highnesses’?” asked Margaret; for neither she nor Frances had ever heard the title before and they did not know what it meant.

“Oh, excuse me!” cried the Admiral, apologetically. “I ought to have guessed it. Your Royal Highnesses prefer to travel incog?”

“In what?” asked Margaret. “I thought we were to travel in the boat.”

“Ha, ha!” laughed the Admiral, clapping his hands. “Very good! Very good! Wasn’t that good, Bo’sun?”

“A. I at Lloyd’s,” replied the Crew. “We must tell that to the King.”

The children had not the least idea what the Admiral and the Crew were laughing about, nor what the Crew meant by saying “A. I at Lloyd’s,” but it was evident that Margaret had made a capital joke by accident, and so, trying to look as though they understood quite well, they smiled pleasantly at the two naval men and stepped upon the shelf of rock

## COCO BOLO

beside which the boat was lying.

Now that it was close up, the children were better able to see what the royal yacht was like. Apparently its frame work was made of the skeleton of a very big fish turned upside down, the fish's backbone forming the keel, and its ribs the ribs of the boat. The whole had been coated over with glass, so that the little girls, standing above it and looking down into the boat, could see right through the bottom of it. They could see the seaweeds on the rocks below and the little fishes flipping about.

The bottom of the boat, indeed, being transparent and therefore invisible, stepping into it looked so very much like stepping into the sea that for a moment Margaret and Frances felt some little doubt about venturing.

But seeing that the Crew in the stern was leaning out, holding to the rock with both hands, while the Admiral, having first laid aside his cocked hat, was most obligingly lying flat on his gold-laced waistcoat, holding the boat at its other end to steady it, they hesitated no longer, but first removing their sandals for fear their heels might crack the glass, they stepped in, taking their places side by side on the middle seat.

“What nice soft cushions!” exclaimed Margaret.

## THE ROYAL YACHT

“And see! One of them is marked in the corner with an ‘F’ and the other with an ‘M’.”

“‘F’ for Frances and ‘M’ for Margaret,” remarked her sister, seating herself on her own cushion and placing her sandals in her lap. “Come on, Periwinkle!” she cried, chirruping encouragingly to the yellow plush puppy. “Come on, then: don’t be afraid!”

Periwinkle, however was not to be persuaded. Standing on the edge of the rock, looking down into the boat, he, too, could see the fishes passing beneath it, and not knowing that the boat had a glass bottom, he declined to jump into the water—as he supposed.

Frances, therefore, reached out, and taking her pet by the back of his neck, she pulled him in and set him down at her feet. For a moment the puppy struggled to jump out again, when a big fish, passing just under his nose, diverted his attention. Forgetting his fears, Periwinkle snapped at the fish, and, of course, banged his nose on the glass bottom of the boat, making himself sneeze with great gusto; after which, thinking that it was the fish that had banged him on the nose, he contented himself with barking at them when they glided under the boat. He was a very sensible puppy, considering that he was only stuffed with excelsior.

## COCO BOLO

As soon as he saw that they were all comfortably settled, the Admiral jumped to his feet, clapped his cocked hat on his head, gathered up the rope, and tucking the anchor under his arm, he stepped into the bows.

“Eight bells!” he roared.

At this command, the Crew hastily felt in all his pockets and brought out a number of little bells, which he rang one after the other.

“That’s only seven!” cried the Admiral. “Where’s the other?”

“You have it yourself,” replied the Crew.

“Oh, yes. So I have. Excuse me,” said the Admiral, politely; and thereupon he took the eighth bell out of his pocket and rang that one, too.

“Why do you ring eight bells?” asked Margaret.

“I thought you’d like it,” was the Admiral’s unexpected reply.

“Oh! Yes. Thank you very much. I do,” said Margaret.

“It’s very pretty,” added Frances. “Won’t you ring them again?”

“I’m afraid we can’t” replied the Admiral, regretfully. “It’s against the rules of the navy. We only ring eight bells once a day at mid-day, or, on occasions like this, once extra for a treat, so—Ah!

## THE ROYAL YACHT

Happy thought! How's the sun?" he shouted.

"It's shining away like one o'clock," replied the Crew, touching his cap.

"*Just* like one o'clock?" inquired the Admiral in an insinuating tone.

"Well," replied the Crew, evidently anxious to accommodate, "it's a good deal like twelve o'clock, too."

"Good!" cried the Admiral, clapping his hands. "A poor excuse is better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick. We'll ring 'em again. Eight bells!" he roared, so loudly that it made his eyes water.

So the Admiral and the Crew rang eight bells all over again, after which the Admiral threw his bell to the Crew, who very cleverly caught it and stuffed it into his pocket, and having gathered up the other seven bells and put them into his pockets, too, he laid his hands on the spokes of the wheel and waited for further orders.

"How's her head?" cried the Admiral.

"North, south, east, west," replied the Crew, with all the smartness of a man-o'-war's man.

"Good!" shouted the Admiral. "Cast off!"

Not knowing what "Cast off" might mean, the two little girls turned their heads to see what the Crew was going to do. As far as they could per-

## COCO BOLO

ceive, however, "Cast off" did not mean anything at all, for the Crew never moved, but stood there smiling away over the top of the wheel as though he were waiting to be photographed.

"Why did you say, 'Cast off'?" inquired Margaret of the Admiral. "What does it mean?"

"It means, untie the ship," replied the Admiral.

"But the ship *is* untied," Margaret objected.

"I know. It's just a matter of form. Now, if you are quite ready, we'll start at once."

"Quite ready, thank you," replied both little girls, eagerly; for there seemed to be so many forms and ceremonies that they began to fear they might be late for the garden party.

"Starboard!" shouted the Admiral.

Whereupon the Crew gave the wheel a spang with his right hand which sent it spinning at a great rate, at the same time glancing out of the corners of his eyes at the two passengers to see what they thought of his cleverness.

"Good!" cried Margaret and Frances, clapping their hands; at which the Crew, beaming with pleasure, touched his cap and bowed. In doing so, however, he forgot the wheel, and one of the spokes hit him such a crack on the right side of his nose that the wheel stopped spinning.

## THE ROYAL YACHT

“Oh!” cried both children. “That *must* have hurt!”

“Not at all, thank your Ladyships,” replied the Crew, smiling away just as cheerfully as ever.

“What a brave little sailor-man you are,” said Frances, admiringly. “Most people would have wanted to cry after getting such a knock.”

“Excuse me, Ladies,” the Admiral here interposed, very politely. “Pray excuse me, but it is against the rules of the navy to speak to the man at the wheel.”

“Oh, is it?” replied Margaret and Frances. “We’re sorry. We didn’t know that.”

“Don’t mention it,” said the Admiral, pleasantly. “It’s of no consequence.” And turning to the Crew, he asked: “It didn’t break your nose, did it? Because you had better mend it at once if it did. The glue is in the medicine chest.”

“It’s all right, sir, thank you,” replied the Crew, tapping his nose with his knuckles. “Only dented. No harm done.”

“Very well; then we’ll proceed. Starboard!” he shouted once more.

“You said ‘Starboard’ last time,” remonstrated the Crew, touching his cap.

“Oh, yes. So I did. Thank you. Let me see:

## COCO BOLO

what comes next? Oh, yes. Port!"

The Crew, who was only waiting for the word, spun the wheel the other way; such a spin that the spokes hummed like the piping of a mosquito.

"Fine spin!" cried Margaret, enthusiastically, clapping her hands again.

"Yes. How fast it goes!" said Frances. "You can't even see the spokes."

Hearing this remark, the Crew, delighted with the compliment, smiled immensely, and stooping down with his hands on his knees he peeped through the wheel at them.

"Peek-a-boo!" cried Frances, quite forgetting the rules of the navy.

For though the Crew was presumably a grown up sailor-man, he was so small and so neat and so bright-colored and so merry-looking that it was quite impossible to take him seriously.

At this moment the boat started.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KING'S HOUNDS

**T**HE boat started so suddenly that the Crew, stooping to peep through the wheel, was taken by surprise and lost his balance. Down he sat upon the deck, his heels went up into the air, and he would certainly have gone over backwards into the water had it not been for Frances, who, very quickly and very cleverly hooked the handle of her parasol in one leg of his trousers and tilted him back to a sitting position.

“Thank you, Miss,” said the Crew, touching his cap.

“Very much obliged,” remarked the Admiral. “It might have spoilt his complexion to have fallen into the water.”

“You are very welcome,” said Frances, cordially. “But why did the boat start so suddenly? What made it start?”

“I did,” replied the Admiral.

“You did? How?”

## COCO BOLO

"I'll show you," said the Admiral, evidently much pleased by the interest the little girls took in the working of the yacht. "Look!"

He was seated in the front end of the boat in one of those whirligig office chairs which grow taller and taller if you wind them one way and shorter and shorter if you wind them the other. When he said, "Look," he gave a kick off with his left foot, round spun the chair and stopped. Immediately the boat began to slow down.

"See?" asked the Admiral.

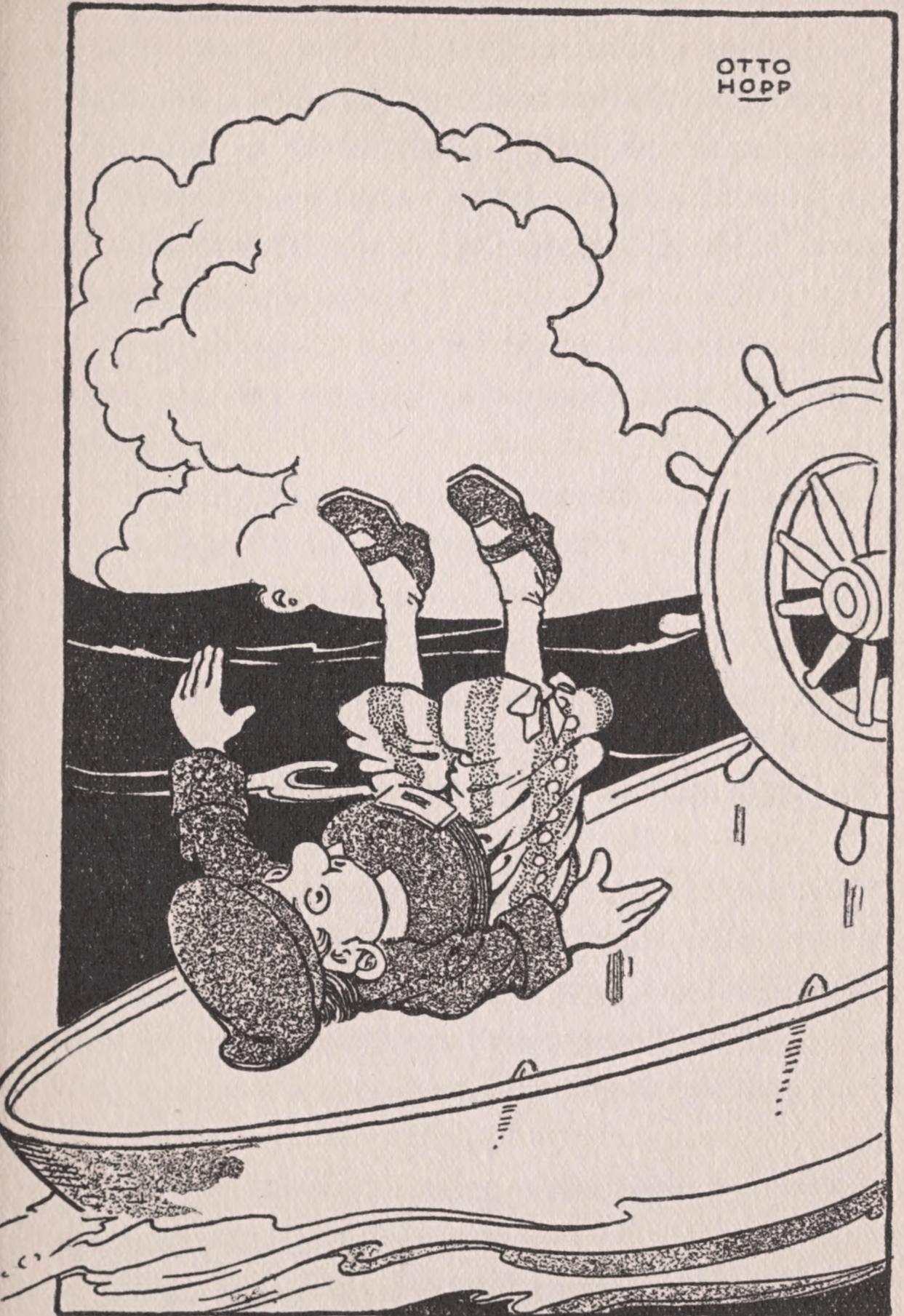
"Yes, I see," replied Margaret, who happened to be the one to catch his eye. "I see, but I don't understand. The boat has no sail and it has no oars and it has no engine: what is the—the—?"

"What makes it go?" asked Frances.

"What is the motive power, you were going to say, weren't you?" asked the Admiral. "Ha, ha!" he cried, rubbing his hands. "You'd never guess. Never. Look here!" jumping out of his chair and patting the cushion—a very fat air-cushion blown up extremely tight. "This contains the motive power. All you have to do is to sit on the cushion, give a twist to the chair, and away you go."

"I see," said Margaret again. "Very simple. But what is the motive power? Gasoline?"

OTTO  
HOPP



*His heels went up in the air*



## THE KING'S HOUNDS

"Oh, dear, no!" cried the Admiral, holding up his hands as though horrified at the suggestion. "Nothing so barbarous as gasoline. Unpleasant smells and unnecessary noises are not allowed on the Floating Islands. The cushion is filled with snap-dragon's breath."

"Snap-dragon's breath!" cried both little girls, sitting up very straight and opening their eyes very widely.

"Yes; the King's pet snap-dragon. He blows up the cushion for us every morning."

"So there *is* a dragon on the island, then, is there?"

"Lobsterneck, the Great American Snap-Dragon," replied the Admiral, proudly, making himself as tall as he possibly could and puffing out his cheeks so tightly that his whiskers stood on end.

So Daddy was right, and there *was* a dragon after all! Margaret and Frances could not help feeling just a little bit uneasy at the thought, for though they felt sure the dragon would be a tame one, still, a dragon was a dragon—there was no getting over that fact.

But the Admiral, seeing them look so serious, hastened to relieve their minds.

"Your Royal Hi—Your Ladyships, I mean," he

## COCO BOLO

corrected himself, "need not be in the least alarmed: the King's dragon is not at all like the common, low-class dragons you are accustomed to."

"But we aren't—" Margaret began, when the Admiral stopped her with a polite wave of his hand.

"I know," said he. "I quite understand. You were going to say you are not accustomed to associate with dragons at all. Very natural. The average dragon, I am aware, is a rude and boisterous creature. But Lobsterneck! Well, Lobsterneck is *not* an average dragon. In the first place he is a snap-dragon; and in the second place he is the most amiable and considerate snap-dragon you ever met. He lives by himself in a round tower on the top of Dragon hill, and he never thinks of taking a walk without first putting boxing gloves on all six of his claws for fear he should accidentally step on somebody and scratch their paint off. And then he is such friends with the children! As soon as he appears they all run and scramble upon his back. You'll see a dozen of them perched up there at once sometimes, all in a row, like swallows on a telegraph wire, and a dozen more running behind, begging for a ride."

"What a nice dragon!" exclaimed Margaret. "And is he polite to strangers?"

"Always," replied the Admiral.

## THE KING'S HOUNDS

“And—and to puppies?” asked Frances, leaning forward to stroke Periwinkle’s head.

“Always,” replied the Admiral once more.

“Well, then,” said Frances, “let us start at once. We should be so sorry if we were late; and we are not at all afraid of the dragon any more, are we, Margaret?”

“Not the least,” replied her sister. “So, let’s start again at once.”

“Very good,” said the Admiral; and with that he jumped into his chair again and gave a push off with his right foot. Round spun the chair with the Admiral in it, and away went the boat, skipping over the tops of the waves, as a boy can make a flat stone skip across a pond—and a girl can’t.

“How beautifully it goes!” cried Margaret. “It’s almost like flying. What is the boat’s name? Has it any name?”

“Certainly,” replied the Admiral. “The name is painted on the bows. You can see it yourself through the glass.”

“Oh, yes! So I can! I wonder if I can read it. ‘M, A,—’ Why! The letters are all turned the wrong way! What is that for?”

“That is because they are painted on the other side of the glass. You are looking at the backs of

## COCO BOLO

the letters. Begin at the other end, and then you will see."

" 'T, H, E,' The," began Margaret. " 'P, L, E, A,—' It's too hard for me. What *does* it spell?"

" 'The Pleasant Dream'," replied the Admiral. "Good name, isn't it?"

"Very good," Margaret agreed. "Because it is almost like a boat in a dream, the way it skips from one wave to the next."

In fact, the boat went so fast and made such a breeze that Margaret could not keep her hat on. She therefore placed it in her lap and tied her handkerchief over her head instead. As she cocked her chin sideways to tie the knot, she happened to catch sight of the Crew out of the corner of her eye. To her surprise he was sitting cross-legged on the deck behind the wheel, a little looking-glass in his hand and the medicine chest before him, busily repairing the dent in his nose with some putty.

"Why don't you—?" she began; but remembering that it was against the rules of the navy to speak to the man at the wheel, she turned to the Admiral instead, and said:

"Why doesn't he attend to the steering?"

"He's busy just now," replied the Admiral, "but he will directly. And, anyhow," he added, "it

## THE KING'S HOUNDS

doesn't make much difference: there isn't any rudder."

"No rudder!" cried Margaret in astonishment; for she had always understood that the rudder was the most important part of a ship.

"No. But that is not of the least consequence: I know the way."

The children did not know very much about boats, but it certainly did seem a queer way of managing things. Nevertheless, though the Admiral, riding backwards, never turned his head to see which way they were going, and though the Crew, having put-tied up the dent in his nose, was now so busy with a paint-brush, painting the patch to match the rest of his complexion, that he never looked up, The Pleasant Dream continued on its course as straight as an arrow, skimming the waves like a seagull. So the children, concluding it was all right, settled themselves comfortably on their cushions, prepared to enjoy their outing.

If the boat seemed to fly, so did the time. Neither of the children owned a watch, so they could not tell how long they had been going, but it seemed to them not more than ten minutes ere the Floating Island began to loom up big before them. It was a peculiar-looking island—a very peculiar-looking island. At

## COCO BOLO

first sight it looked like an enormous, square, frosted sponge-cake floating on the water, its sides as high as a house and as straight up-and-down as a wall. Then, as they drew nearer, it appeared to the children to be like an immense block of sea-foam with as many colors in it as a soap-bubble. It was not till they had come pretty close to it that they made out at last what it really was:—a thick and solid bank of cloud, all pink and white and shining.

They had come within little more than a quarter of a mile of it, when the cloud-wall suddenly split in two from top to bottom—only for one second, for the narrow crack closed up again directly. But in that brief time the children caught a glimpse of what appeared to be a most beautiful floating flower-garden.

“Just as if a bit of a rainbow had tumbled into the sea,” was Frances’ comment.

But they caught sight of something else as well; something far more curious than any flower-garden.

In the middle of the island was a rather high hill; on top of the hill was a fat round tower; and on top of the tower, seated on a three-legged stool, combing his whiskers with his claws, sat some huge, strange creature, unlike anything they had ever seen before.

“What’s that?” whispered Frances; for the Ad-

## THE KING'S HOUNDS

miral was dozing and she did not want to disturb him.

Before Margaret could reply, the creature, whatever it was, caught sight of them, when, just as the crack in the cloud-wall closed up again, it rose up on its hind feet, and putting its fore-paws to its mouth it bellowed like a cow.

"The whistling buoy!" cried Margaret. "I've heard it before."

"Excuse me, Miss," whispered a voice behind them; and looking back, they saw that the Crew was peeping at them over the top of the wheel. "Excuse me, Ladies," said he, "but you are mistaken. That was the King's dragon."

"The King's dragon!"

"Yes, Miss: the King's pet snap-dragon. He sits up there on his tower to keep watch, and when he sees anyone coming he bellows like that to give notice."

"Are you sure?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, yes, Miss. Quite sure."

"Well," said Margaret, "I'm very glad to know that. I've often heard the sound from the shore, and somebody told me it was the whistling buoy. Now I shall know next time. There he goes again!"

At this second bellow the Admiral woke up with a

## COCO BOLO

start. He cast a glance over his shoulder, and seeing how near they had come, he spun his chair round till it would go no further, when the boat immediately began to slacken speed.

It was still going pretty fast, however, and the cloud-wall looked so solid that Margaret and Frances could not help feeling just a little bit anxious lest the glass boat should be cracked when it ran against it; which it was evidently going to do, for it kept straight on its course.

But as the Admiral and the Crew were perfectly calm about it, they felt reassured, and presently the frail boat ran into the wall without a shock or a tremor. It just made a hole which closed up behind it—and there they were, unable to see out in any direction.

At the same moment there arose all round them, in front and behind and on both sides, a perfect clamor of barking, as though a hundred dogs were all barking at once and all trying to see which could bark the loudest and the fastest.

“Why! Where are they all?” cried Margaret, looking vainly about in every direction. “It sounds as though they were in the water.”

“They are,” replied the Admiral, smiling at her wonder. “They always bark like this when they

## THE KING'S HOUNDS

hear the dragon bellow."

"But I don't understand," said Margaret. "Dogs don't live in the sea."

"These dogs do."

"Why! What kind of dogs are they?"

"They are sea-dogs," replied the Admiral. "The King's own pack of hounds. The Royal Dog-fish."

"Oh!" cried Frances, laughing. "I see. So they are fish after all, and not dogs."

"But," remarked Margaret, "if they are fish, how can they bark? I never heard of fishes barking; not even dog-fishes."

"They don't as a rule," replied the Admiral; "but these have been trained for the purpose. Just as soon as ever they cut their first teeth their diet is most carefully regulated with the special object of cultivating their voices."

"What are they fed on, then?" asked Margaret. "Dog biscuit?"

"No. Bark," replied the Admiral. "The bark of the dog-wood."

"Oh! Of course!" cried both the children. "We might have guessed that."

At this moment the boat ran through the cloud-wall and now the children could see what sort of a place the Floating Island really was.

## CHAPTER V

### THE COURT CRIER

**T**HEY found themselves in a beautiful little bay of a bright green color, fringed all round with neat little, curly, white waves, all exactly four inches high and ten feet apart. "Like rows of tucks round the bottom of a dress," thought Frances.

But the island itself was what most attracted their attention. It was like a Japanese garden, with little green hills and little red footpaths bordered with white shells; with little lakes and little streams and little bridges; it was dotted all about with little houses painted all sorts of bright colors; and there were flowers—flowers everywhere. It was the prettiest place they had ever seen.

From all directions were little people running down to the pier to meet them; the excited dragon was jumping about on top of his tower, bellowing like a whole herd of milk cows at once; while all the dog-fish, with their noses sticking out of the water, came swarming from every direction, barking away

## THE COURT CRIER

—to the great alarm of Periwinkle—as loudly as they could, and making such a racket that Margaret and Frances were obliged to put their fingers into their ears for fear of being deafened.

Seeing this, the Admiral jumped out of his chair, waved his arms, and shouted out, “King’s guests! King’s guests!” Whereupon, all those polite and well-trained dog-fish leaped out of the water, and standing on their heads, wagged their tails in welcome, sending into the air showers of spray which the bright sun turned into dozens and dozens of little rainbows. It was the prettiest thing you ever saw. The little girls were delighted.

By this time the speed of the boat had very much slackened, it was just gliding along with hardly a ripple toward the little wooden pier, painted white with red posts, where the bright-colored little people were standing in groups waiting for them. There were groups of little men and groups of little women and groups of little children, some of them dressed in pink and some in green and some in yellow and some in orange and some in white and some in purple—but not a single one in blue, as Frances was the first to notice.

“Do you see, Margaret?” she whispered. “There isn’t one of them dressed in blue. Not one!”

## COCO BOLO

“So there isn’t” replied her sister. “I wonder why.”

But before she could ask why, the Admiral jumped into the bow of the boat, took off his cocked hat, and waving it above his head, called out again, “King’s guests! King’s guests!” Upon which all the little people in little shrill voices shouted “Welcome to the King’s guests!” and waved their pocket handkerchiefs. It was just as though a flock of pigeons had suddenly flown up out of a flower-bed.

At the same moment the children saw coming down the road a little carriage drawn by two pretty little horses of the color of a new horse-chestnut, with white manes, cut short, and with stiff little white tails like bottle-brushes. The coachman, who sat up very straight and stuck out his elbows with an air of great importance, was dressed in a fuzzy white wig with a three-cornered hat on top of it, a green coat with gold buttons, white knee-breeches and rose-colored stockings. Altogether, he looked very smart indeed, and very well pleased with himself, too, to judge by the way he smiled as he drew up his chubby little horses at the far end of the pier.

For that matter, though, everybody was smiling away in a manner so cheerful that the children thought they had never seen such a merry-looking

## THE COURT CRIER

lot of people, and as smiles are just as catching as whooping cough, Margaret and Frances could not help smiling too; whereupon all the people on the pier smiled twice as much as before and clapped their hands for joy.

“What nice people!” exclaimed Margaret.

“Yes. Aren’t you glad we came?” responded her sister. “And such a pretty place, too; and—I wonder who the old gentleman is, coming down to the steps.”

In fact, as the boat slowly glided up to the steps at the end of the pier, an old gentleman came forward and took up his position on the top step; all the rest of the people standing back at a respectful distance, forming a half-circle behind him. He was a tall old gentleman—for a Floating Islander—with a head perfectly bald except for a fringe of white hair at the back extending from one ear to the other; wearing a long green cloak with silver willow leaves embroidered round the collar. In one hand he carried a large copper bell, like a cow-bell, and in the other a sheet of parchment with a big red seal hanging to it.

“The Court Crier,” explained the Admiral, whispering behind his hand; and as he said it, the boat stopped of its own accord at the bottom step.

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As if the stopping of the boat had been the moment he was waiting for, the Court Crier began vigorously ringing his bell; whereupon all the people ceased clapping their hands and stood quiet to hear what the Court Crier might have to say. Even the dragon up on his tower—as the little girls noticed—sat down again on his three-legged stool, and folding two pairs of claws across his stomach, cocked his ears forward to listen.

“Oh, yes! Oh, yes!” called the Court Crier, and after a short pause, finding that nobody cried, “Oh, no!” he hung his bell about his neck, unfolded his parchment, and having first bowed deferentially to the two little girls—who, all this time were sitting in the boat, wondering what was to happen next—he called out:

“Proclamation by the King! ‘To Margaret and Frances, Greeting: Coco Bolo, King of the Floating Islands, extends his hearty welcome to Margaret and Frances and begs they will regard as their own his Island, his People, his Dragon and Himself!’ ”

Having finished his reading, the Court Crier folded up his parchment and put it into his pocket, and then, taking the bell from his neck, he rang it once more. Upon this, all the little people clapped their hands again, the dog-fish barked and the

## THE COURT CRIER

dragon bellowed; at which Margaret and Frances were very glad, for it gave them time to think of a proper reply.

Rising to their feet, and standing side by side in the boat, the two little girls bowed to the Court Crier and the people behind him, when the Court Crier held up his bell, upside-down, above his head, as a sign for all sounds to cease.

Though neither of them had ever attempted to make a speech in their lives, nor had even thought of doing such a thing, the two children, for some reason, did not find themselves at all abashed at having to stand up and deliver a formal reply to the King's proclamation. Perhaps it was that the little people on the pier were so much smaller than themselves; perhaps it was that their brightness and cheerfulness and seeming readiness to be pleased gave the children confidence; but whatever the cause, as soon as the people had ceased clapping their hands and the dog-fish had ceased barking, and as soon as the puppy-fish—which had been larking about according to the nature of all puppies, growling and splashing and biting each others' tails—as soon as they had been slapped by their elders and told to keep quiet, Margaret made another polite bow, and said:

“Thank you, Mr. Court Crier. We are very much

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obliged to you; and we are very much obliged to Coco Bolo Rex for inviting us to come, and we are quite sure we shall enjoy ourselves."

"And," added Frances, "we never saw such a pretty place or such nice, smiling people before."

These speeches evidently pleased the people very much, for they all clapped their hands once more; and while they were doing so, the Admiral and the Crew, jumping out of the boat, offered their hands to Margaret and Frances to help them ashore.

No sooner had they set foot on the bottom step than there came running out of the crowd two pretty little boys, one carrying a great bunch of violets and the other a bunch of daffodils. The violets were evidently intended for Margaret and the daffodils for Frances, but unfortunately, just as he reached the top step, Margaret's little boy caught his toe and down he fell, all down the steps, making a great clatter, and into the water he would certainly have rolled had not Margaret caught him, when, putting her foot on the next step above, she set him upon her knee.

"Oh, you poor little boy!" she exclaimed. "You did hurt yourself, didn't you?"

"Don't cry, Dearie," said Frances, bending over him with her handkerchief in her hand, all ready to

## THE COURT CRIER

dry his tears. She made sure he would cry tremendously; for what little boy would not after falling down twelve steps and knocking his knees and his nose and his elbows on every single one of them?

But this little boy, greatly to their surprise, did not make a sound. He puckered up his face, indeed, as though he would very much like to cry, but he did not. Instead of that, he looked hard at the Court Crier, as though he expected *him* to do something, though what the little boy could possibly expect of a thin, dried up, bald headed old gentleman like the Court Crier, the two children could not imagine.

The little boy, though, evidently knew what he was about.

“Where’s my caddy?” shouted the Court Crier in a great hurry; whereupon there ran out of the crowd another little boy with a number on his hat, who carried hung around his neck with a pink ribbon, a little oblong box, like an old-fashioned tea-caddy, divided into two compartments.

Lifting the lid of this box, the Court Crier took out of the left hand compartment a large, clean pocket handkerchief, and then—! Down he plumped on the top step and began crying floods of tears, bawling and snuffling and making a great to do. If he had tumbled down a flight of fifty marble steps himself

## COCO BOLO

he could not have made more fuss about it.

Margaret and Frances were standing with their eyes wide open, wondering what was the meaning of it, when the Admiral, seeing how puzzled they were, stepped up to them and whispered:

“He’s the Court Crier, you know.”

“Yes, I know,” replied Margaret. “But what has that to do with it?”

“What has that to do with it!” repeated the Admiral, astonished in his turn. “Why, everything. What do you suppose a Court Crier is for?”

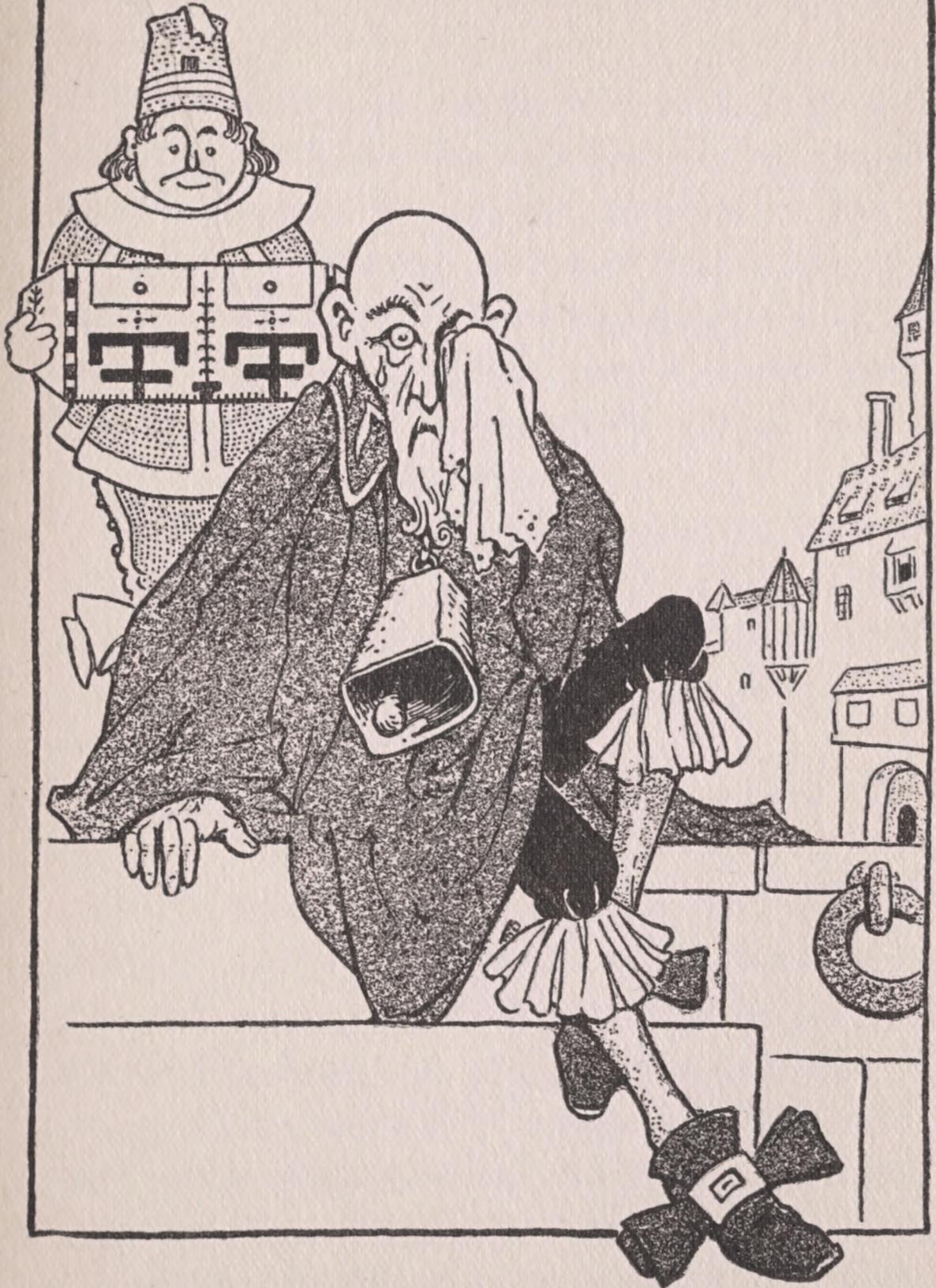
“I don’t know,” replied Margaret. “What is he for?”

“Why, to cry, of course, when anybody gets hurt.”

“What!” exclaimed Frances. “Do you mean to say that people are not allowed to cry for themselves?”

The Admiral shook his head. “Never,” said he. “It couldn’t be allowed on any account. It is the special privilege of the Court Crier to do all the crying. The office has been held by his family for ages. He is one of the Weeping Willows, you know, as I told you.”

The children were still wondering at this very funny arrangement, when they noticed that the Court Crier every now and then moved his handkerchief



*Down he plumped on the  
top step*



## THE COURT CRIER

to one side and peeped with one eye at the little boy on Margaret's knee, as if to see how he was getting on.

Observing this, Margaret also peeped at him, when she noticed that the little boy, who at first had been screwing up his face into all sorts of shapes, was gradually growing more and more composed, until presently he burst out smiling again, and scrambling down from Margaret's knee, he turned round and handed to her the bunch of violets, just as though nothing had happened.

Instantly, the Court Crier jumped to his feet, wrung half a pint of tears out of his handkerchief, and rolling it up into a ball, he opened the lid of his caddy-box and flung the handkerchief into the other compartment.

"Pardon the interruption, Ladies," said he. "We will now proceed."

At this, the Admiral and the Crew presented their hands to the two little girls and led them up the steps, when, the moment they set foot on the pier, all the little people ran and arranged themselves in two rows on either side of a long green carpet with red borders which stretched all the way to the other end; a band on shore struck up a merry tune; the Court Crier, drawing himself up as tall as he could,

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called out, "Form the procession!" and everyone at once fell into his proper place.

First of all marched the two little boys; then the Court Crier; then Periwinkle; then Margaret and Frances, hand in hand; and after them the Admiral and the Crew; the people, all clapping their hands to keep time to the music, falling in behind as they passed, so that ere they had reached the other end of the pier the procession was quite a long one.

"It's just as if we were princesses," remarked Margaret.

"Yes. Isn't it fun!" cried Frances; and looking at the rows of smiling little people, the two children could not help laughing and kissing their hands to them, as they had heard was the custom of princesses.

Whether it was the custom of princesses or not, it was plainly the right thing to do here, for the people all began to sing and dance, holding hands, while the band played louder than ever, and the two round, fat little horses in the carriage stood on their hind legs and waved their front feet in the air as if to welcome the King's guests.

As soon as the procession reached the end of the pier, the Court Crier opened the carriage door, when Margaret and Frances got in and away they

## THE COURT CRIER

went, still in procession: all the children running in front, scattering flowers on the road; then the Court Crier, ringing his bell; then the band; then the Admiral and the Crew, arm in arm; then the carriage; and then the people all dancing in pairs.

Pretty soon the children saw before them a beautiful little palace, built of pink and white coral in alternate layers, with battlements and towers and balconies and terraces and a big, arched front gate like a church doorway. On either side of the entrance-gate sat a line of sentinels on chestnut horses, six on each side, their brass helmets glittering in the sun, their chests stuck out and their backs very straight, trying their best to look fierce and warlike.

In this, however, they were not very successful, for though their moustaches stood out as stiff as gimlets, their faces looked so cheerful that Margaret and Frances felt sure their fierceness was all put on for appearance-sake.

“We can easily find out,” said Frances. “Let’s kiss our hands to them, and see if they don’t smile.”

“Very well,” replied her sister. “I expect that is what a princess would do, anyhow. I know I should if I were a princess. So let’s do it.”

It was a most successful move. The soldiers all broke into smiles of the largest size and waved their

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swords in the air; their steeds stood up on their hind feet and danced round and round like performing dogs; and thus passing between the two lines of capering horses, the carriage rolled through the gateway into the palace courtyard, the band and the people remaining outside and only the Court Crier and the Admiral accompanying the King's guests to the foot of the palace steps.

## CHAPTER VI

### REFRESHMENTS

**A**S soon as the carriage stopped, the Court Crier opened the door and he and the Admiral handed out the two little girls. At the same moment there came running down the steps two rosy-cheeked young women in caps and aprons, white cuffs and turn-down collars, like trained nurses, who courtesied very nicely and said:

“If you will please to come with us, Ladies, we will show you to the refreshment room.”

Walking up the steps behind the two little maids, Margaret and Frances were shown into a large, pleasant room, furnished in green and white, with sofas and rocking chairs and everything they could want. Looking about them, the first thing they noticed was a card tacked on the inside of the door, such as they remembered to have seen once in a hotel bedroom, and supposing it to be the rules of the palace, they thought they had better read it. It was not the rules of the palace, but it was something

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just as important, as Margaret soon discovered, when, pulling forward a chair, she sat down to read it—for the card, being put there for the accommodation of small people like the Floating Islanders, was rather low down on the door.

“What does it say?” asked Frances. “Can you read it?”

“Oh, yes,” replied her sister. “This is what it says,”—pointing out each word with her finger as she read it:

“ ‘Laws of the Floating Islands.

(1) Be Cheerful.

(2) Be Polite.

Anyone Disobeying These Laws

Will Be

Put In The Corner

And

Painted Blue.’ ”

“Oh! So *that's* why nobody dresses in blue!” cried Frances. “I thought there must be some reason.”

“Yes; and what a good thing it was we wore our pink dresses and flowered hair-ribbons today. Well, it is easy enough to learn these laws:—‘Be cheerful. Be polite’. I know them already. What is this up here?”

## REFRESHMENTS

All down one side of the doorway were a number of electric buttons, marked, 'Ice-cream', 'Cookies', 'Candy', 'Oranges', 'Bananas', and so forth, and at the bottom, showing how thoughtful the King was, 'Pepsin.'

"I suppose," said Frances, "if you want any of these things you just press the button. Do you think Mother would let us have a cooky. I'm rather hungry."

"I'm sure she would," replied her elder sister. "And I should like something to drink, too. See! Here are the things to drink on the other door post: 'Lemonade', 'Sherbet', and a lot of other things. What should we ask for? Lemonade?"

"Lemonade is good," remarked Frances. "What else is there?"

"Here's 'Aërated water'," Margaret spelled out. "Would you like that?"

"No," replied Frances. "That's that fizzy stuff. I like it, but it tickles my nose so. I don't think I want that. What's next?"

"'Plain water'," read Margaret.

"Oh, no. We can get plain water at home."

"'Aëro-plane water'" read Margaret. "I wonder what that is."

"I expect it's not so plain as plain water, and not

## COCO BOLO

so fizzy as fizzy water,” replied Frances. “I think I should like to try it. Suppose you ask for a lemonade and I’ll ask for an aëro-plane water, and then we can divide.”

“Very well. Then I’ll press these two buttons and you press the one marked ‘Cookies.’ ”

They pressed the buttons accordingly, when, almost in no time, it seemed, they heard something go *snick*, and turning in that direction they saw that a little cupboard door in the wall had flown open. Inside the cupboard was a tray with a plate of cookies upon it and two glasses, one, a big glass of lemonade with two straws in it, and the other, a smaller glass containing what appeared to be plain water with six round, fat bubbles floating about in it. On the edge of this glass, hanging by a little hook, was a pair of small tweezers.

“Why! What are they for?” exclaimed Frances, as she unhooked them and laid them on the tray. “What did they send us tweezers for?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied her sister. “Perhaps we shall find out presently. Bring the tray over here, Frances, and put it on this little table. Ah! This lemonade is good! What does your aëro-plane water taste like?”

“Why, it doesn’t taste like anything,” replied

## REFRESHMENTS

Frances, in a tone of some disappointment. "It's just plain water. They must have forgotten the 'aëro' part!"

"Perhaps the bubbles are the 'aëro' part," suggested Margaret.

"Oh, perhaps they are. I'll drink one."

But try as she might, she could not catch one of them. Every time she touched one with her lips it bobbed away—the bubbles were so large and so round and so slippery.

"The tweezers!" cried Margaret.

"Oh! Of course!" exclaimed Frances. "That's what the tweezers are for!"

Undoubtedly it was, for, with the help of the tweezers, Frances very soon caught a bubble and popped it into her mouth.

Margaret, watching her, saw her eyes sparkle and a look of pleased surprise come over her face.

"That tastes, does it?" she asked.

For half a minute Frances did not reply; all she said was, "M-m-m," keeping her lips shut tight as though to let none of the taste escape; but presently she opened her mouth and said:

"Yes, that tastes. It's the very nicest thing I ever did taste: like—let me see—like pine-apple and strawberry jam and—and—I can't think what else.

## COCO BOLO

Wait till I try another. There are five left. I'll take two more and leave the rest for you."

So saying, she caught two more bubbles and then passed over the glass to Margaret, who, in turn, passed over the half-finished lemonade to her sister. As she did so, she saw an odd expression come over Frances' face.

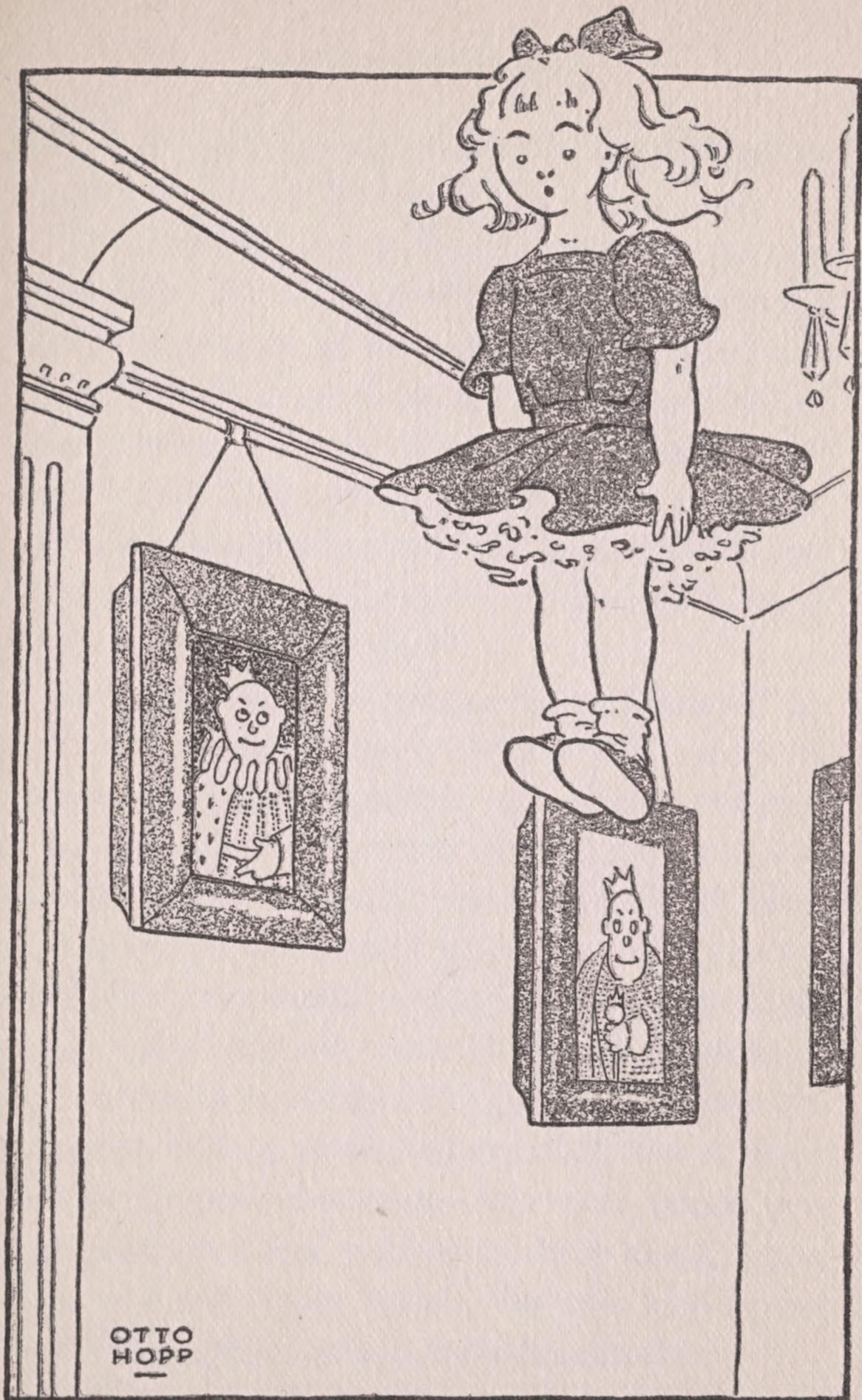
"What's the matter?" she asked.

"I don't know," replied Frances. "I don't think there's anything the matter, but I have such a funny feeling—just as if I didn't weigh anything. I feel as if I wanted to get up and fly."

"Try, then," suggested Margaret. "Perhaps you can if you try. Try."

Frances, rather gingerly, got out of her chair, gave a flap with her arms and a little stamp with both feet, and up to the ceiling she went like a feather. It was a high ceiling, but she went up far enough to touch it with her fingers, when she began gently floating down again, her dress standing out all around like a pink umbrella. She looked so comical, with her elbows tucked into her sides and her fingers spread out, her lips puckered up and her eyebrows raised, that Margaret could not help laughing.

"Oh, what fun!" she cried, seizing the tweezers



*Began gently floating down  
again*



## REFRESHMENTS

and the glass of aëro-plane water. "I'm coming too. Can you wait there, Frances?"

"No, I can't," replied her sister, who was now down about the level of the tops of the pictures. "I'm coming down all the time. And if I were you, Margaret," she added hastily, "I'd only take two of those bubbles—or one. I'm rather *too* light. It's a good thing I didn't take all six of them or I might have gone straight up to the ceiling and had to stay there, crawling about like a fly. I wonder if—hand me the lemonade, will you?"

Margaret dragged a chair to the spot, jumped upon it and handed up the half-glass of lemonade to her sister. Frances, however, did not take the glass in her hand; she took the straws, and leaning forward, tried to drink the lemonade. But though Margaret stood on tip-toe and reached up as far as she could, Frances was still about four inches too high, so she waited a minute until she had come down a little further when she tried again. This time she succeeded, finding, as she had expected, that at every swallow she came down more and more quickly, until presently her feet touched the floor again, when, as she was still rather bouncy, she took hold of the edge of the table to steady herself, and said:

"I'll tell you what you'd better do, Margaret:

## COCO BOLO

Take only one of those bubbles at a time and see if it isn't enough. I'm a good deal too light; I shall have to put some stones in my pocket, or something. I'm afraid, if I were to go out of doors, the wind might blow me into the sea. So just take one first, Margaret, and see how that does."

This seemed like good advice, so Margaret, taking the tweezers, caught one bubble and ate it up.

"M-m-m," she murmured, just as Frances had done. "That *is* good. There's preserved ginger in it, too, and I think there's just a taste of baked apples. Oh! Isn't it a funny feeling!"—stretching out her arms and dancing about—"I wonder if I could jump up to the ceiling like you did."

But she found she could not; though to jump over a big settee in the middle of the room was the easiest thing possible.

"Oh, how nice it is to be so light-footed!" she cried. "One bubble is just enough, Frances; that was a good idea of yours. But what are we going to do to make you a bit heavier? There are no stones here to put into your pockets; and you have only one pocket, anyhow. You'd be all lopsided. You'll have to eat something. That's the only way I see."

"Yes," responded Frances, "that's the only way; and what we need is something heavy, like that little

## REFRESHMENTS

loaf of bread you and I made once for Daddy, don't you remember, and he begged to be excused, because home-made bread sometimes gave him the nightmare, and so we gave it to Kim—that time he howled so in the night, and Daddy had to get up and throw his hair-brush at him."

"Yes, I remember," replied her sister. "That's the sort of thing we want. Let's look at the list here and see if there's anything likely to do. Ah! 'Pound cake'! That ought to be just the thing."

"Pound cake is rather rich, isn't it?" asked Frances.

"I'm afraid it is. Well, here's 'Half-pound cake, for infants and invalids.' The very thing. We'll have that."

She touched the button; open flew the cupboard, and there inside it was a neat little cake with a silver knife to cut it.

"Now," said Margaret, cutting a slice and handing it to her sister. "Eat that and see if it will do."

Still holding to the table for fear she should bob up again to the ceiling unexpectedly, Frances ate about half the slice, when she laid down the rest, remarking:

"I think that's enough, Margaret. I don't feel quite so much like a dandelion seed as I did. Take

## COCO BOLO

my hand and let us skip down the room and back, just to try."

Down the room they skipped, hand in hand, and back again, jumping over the settee on the way and coming lightly down on the carpet, "Like a pair of soap-bubbles," as Frances put it.

"Just exactly," Margaret agreed. "I feel like you feel in a dream sometimes, when you just tap your foot on the floor or your fingers on the backs of the chairs and go floating about the room. How glad I am you asked for aëro-plane water, Frances, or we might never—Come in!"

Somebody had tapped at the door, and on Margaret's calling, "Come in," the two little maids appeared once more, courtesying politely, to inquire if the ladies were ready to put on their wreaths and slippers.

"Wreaths!" cried Margaret.

"Slippers!" cried Frances. "We didn't bring any wreaths and slippers."

At this, one of the little maids, whose name, they found, was Anita, smiled and nodded, and going to a cupboard in the wall which the children had not noticed before, she came back with two cardboard boxes, one of which she handed to each little girl.

"Are we to open them?" asked Margaret.

## REFRESHMENTS

"If you please, Miss," replied Anita.

Each box proved to contain a beautiful wreath made of enameled pink leaves with silver berries—both exactly alike.

"Oh! Aren't they pretty!" exclaimed Frances. "Are we to wear them?"

"Yes, Miss, if you please," replied the little waiting-maid. "All the court ladies wear wreaths and slippers to match. These are your slippers," running to the cupboard and bringing back two pairs of white satin slippers with big pink rosettes on them. "The King hopes you'll like them."

"The King is very kind," replied Margaret. "Yes, these will do beautifully."

"Then, if Your Ladyships are ready, will you please to follow us?"

So saying, Anita threw open the door, when she and the other little maid, taking hands, went skipping off down a wide hallway, Margaret and Frances skipping after them and poor little Periwinkle with a serious countenance galloping behind, until they arrived at the top of a long flight of steps down which they went, six steps at a time, to find the Admiral and the Court Crier waiting for them.

"Quite ready, Ladies?" asked the Admiral. "Then we'll join the garden-party at once."

## CHAPTER VII

### COCO BOLO REX

“**T**HIS way, please,” said their guide, waving his hand toward a pair of big glass doors, on each of which was painted a monogram—C. B. R.—with a crown above it.

The two little maids pulled open the doors, and Margaret and Frances walking through, found themselves looking down upon a beautiful lawn with lots of little marble-topped tables scattered about it, at which sat numbers of bright-colored little people, drinking tea and eating ice-cream and lady-fingers.

Across the middle of the lawn ran a white pathway, at the far end of which was a steep, green bank, forming a sort of raised platform. On this platform, with two little page-boys behind him holding up his scarlet cloak, was a fat little, red-cheeked gentleman with a spiky gold crown on his head, walking to and fro, and every now and then stopping to scoop up bubbles with a silver milk-strainer from a fountain of aëro-plane water.

## COCO BOLO REX

“The King,” whispered the Admiral; and then, putting his hands to his mouth, he shouted:

“King’s Guests!”

At this, all the ladies and gentlemen jumped out of their chairs, and turning to Margaret and Frances made a low bow, while the King, himself, thrusting his milk-strainer into his pocket, ran and leaped from the green bank, the two little boys who had hold of his cloak flying out behind like the tail of a kite.

Up the garden ran the King, the two pages still flying out behind, until he had come to where the children stood, when he stopped, straightened his crown, and after casting a glance over his shoulder to see if the pages had recovered their feet, he advanced with both hands stretched out to welcome his guests.

“Delighted to see you, Ladies,” said he, shaking hands with both of them at once. “Most kind of you to come. What can I offer you by way of refreshment? Here is everything you can think of; and if there’s anything you can’t think of, you have only to express a wish for it and I’ll order it at once.”

“Thank you very much,” replied Margaret, “but we’ve had refreshment already.”

“And we’re much obliged for the wreaths and slippers,” added Frances.

## COCO BOLO

“Not at all,” responded the King. “Most condescending of you to wear them. Do the slippers fit?”

“Perfectly, thank you.”

“All right, then,” unhooking his scarlet cloak and dropping it upon the ground. “Come on, if you’re ready. Race you to the other end!”

Away went the fat little King as hard as he could run, all down the center pathway, and having such a good start he would certainly have won had it not been for the aëro-plane bubbles the children had swallowed. As it was, they took such immense steps that they caught the King just as he reached the platform, on top of which they all jumped in a row and flung themselves down on a three-seated throne, like a high-backed church pew, except that it was decorated with gold knobs and had a crown over the middle seat.

“Good!” cried the King, clapping his hands. “Everybody won! Distribute the prizes!”

At this, all the court ladies and gentlemen came running, the ladies in their wreaths and satin slippers skipping in pairs, weaving their way among the chairs and tables, while the gentlemen, with great agility, leap-frogged over the tops of the tables, all among the cups and saucers, without upsetting one of

them. They all jumped upon the platform and ranged themselves about the throne, clapping their hands with delight when the Court Crier advanced and deposited in the King's lap a wooden box tied with white ribbon.

Having cut the ribbon, the King looked all over the box for a keyhole, but could not find one; nor could he pry open the box with his pocket-knife. It was very tantalizing.

He was bending over the box, looking for some way of opening it, when Frances noticed a little knob at the back, and thinking that perhaps it might be a spring, she leaned forward and pressed it with her finger. She had guessed right. It was a spring; for the box-lid instantly flew up, hitting the King such a crack under his nose that it made him sneeze.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" exclaimed Frances, clasping her hands.

"Not at all," replied His Majesty, very graciously, as he rubbed his nose with the back of his hand; and then, slapping down the lid again, he suddenly burst out laughing.

"Ha! Ha!" he cried, kicking up his feet. "Here's a game! Come here, Admiral! Just come here and smell this box! Any gentleman who can tell by the smell what is inside the box shall be allowed to fast-

## COCO BOLO

en up his stockings with brass-headed tacks.”

All the gentlemen-courtiers crowded round at once, eager to compete for the honor, when the Admiral, who had the first turn, stooped over the box to smell it. This was the moment the King was waiting for. He pressed the spring and *whack* came the lid under the Admiral's nose, causing him to jump into the air and turn a back-somersault right over the heads of the courtiers—a pretty good jump for an admiral, especially with one hand on his nose.

Margaret and Frances of course supposed that the courtiers, seeing what had happened to the Admiral, would decline to smell the box. But, not a bit of it: they did not take warning at all. They all came crowding round, elbowing each other for the next turn, and one after another they stooped to smell the box; one after another they received a crack on the nose; and one after another they jumped backwards—the fat ones about ten feet and the thin ones a foot or two further—and there they all stood in a group holding their noses and gazing fixedly at the Court Crier.

“Caddy! Caddy!” shouted the Court Crier.

Where he came from the children did not observe, but in an instant there *was* the caddy, box and all. The Court Crier immediately opened the caddy-box,

## COCO BOLO REX

took out a clean handkerchief and clapped it over his face.

“Boo-hoo!” he cried, just once, and then peeped round the edge of the handkerchief to see if that was enough. Apparently, it was not quite enough, for he covered his eyes again and boo-hooed once more, when, perceiving that the Admiral and the courtiers had all let go their noses again and were smiling away as usual, he threw the handkerchief into the box, and holding out the skirts of his long cloak with a finger and thumb of each hand, he went skipping round in a circle, the bell about his neck going *clink-clank* at every step.

“Good!” cried the King, clapping his hands. “Jump for joy!”

Thereupon all the courtiers took hands and jumped up and down and back and forth, coming so close up to the throne that Margaret and Frances and the King had to tuck up their feet for fear of having their toes trodden on.

“Oh, bother!” exclaimed His Majesty. “I wish they wouldn’t crowd so”; and so saying, he jumped up into the seat of his throne and shouted as loud as he possibly could:

“DINNER!”

At this, the whole company of courtiers, gentle-

## COCO BOLO

men and ladies as well, turned their backs on the throne, and led by the Court Crier, they leaped off the platform, raced up the center pathway and rushed, pell-mell, through the glass doors at the other end; when the Admiral, who had followed close behind, slammed the doors and locked them. Having done so, the Admiral came smiling back again, twirling the key on his finger.

“What’s that for?” asked Margaret. “Do you always lock the doors for dinner?”

“There isn’t any dinner,” replied the King, slyly screwing up one eye. “It’s just a trick of mine to get rid of them whenever they crowd too much.”

“Do you do it often, then?” asked Margaret.

“Oh, yes. Two or three times a day sometimes.”

“But, don’t they ever learn?” cried Frances in surprise. “I shouldn’t have thought you could have played the same trick on them more than once—or twice.”

“Learn!” cried the King. “They never learn! They are the most wooden-headed lot you ever saw. It isn’t all fun, being a king,” taking off his crown and hanging it over one of the knobs on the back of the throne, “not even a monarch of the Woods—especially the Hardwoods. They *are* such block-heads!”

## COCO BOLO REX

The jovial little King looked almost melancholy, which, of course, was against the laws of the Island, but he recovered again in a moment when the Admiral tactfully poked him in the ribs with the door-key and cried, "Cheer up, Rex!"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the King. "No tickling! Come along, Ladies. Let's go and see the dragon. We'll take the children with us."

"Oh, yes. Do!" cried Margaret, feeling that if the children went, too, it must be perfectly safe. "How many children are there?"

"Six, I think," replied the King. "It is six isn't it, Admiral?"

"I believe it is," assented the Admiral. "Though I'm not quite sure whether the carpenter has finished the last one yet."

"The carpenter!" cried both little girls, opening their eyes very wide.

"Certainly," replied the Admiral. "You didn't suppose it was a job for the blacksmith, did you? But it's a long piece of work, even though the last chip was the smallest of the lot. Coco bolo is such tough stuff, you know, and of course the carpenter has to be extra particular in turning out a Prince."

"Oh, so the little Princes are all made of coco bolo, too, are they?" asked Margaret.

## COCO BOLO

“Why, of course, they are,” replied the King, rather surprised at the question. “Chips from the old block, you know. There were six chips left after I was finished, and the carpenter has been at work on them ever since; though whether he has completed the last one yet, I don’t know. However, we’ll soon see.”

As he said this, the King popped his fingers into his mouth and blew a shrill whistle. Immediately a door in the palace flew open and out came six plump duchesses, with Roman noses and two corkscrew curls apiece, dressed to look like nurses in mob caps and big white aprons, walking one behind the other and each carrying a covered basket on her arm.

“Turn ’em out!” shouted the King; whereupon the six plump duchesses turned their six baskets upside down and out fell six little boys, dressed like Floating Island sailor-men, in cherry-colored blouses and green and white striped bloomers. Some of them fell on their backs and some on their heads and some on their noses and knees, but it seemed to make no difference: they all jumped up at once and came running to where Margaret and Frances and Coco Bolo Rex sat on the three-seated throne waiting for them—skipping and frolicking and playing leap-frog and cutting all sorts of capers.

## COCO BOLO REX

"They've just been dosed," explained the King. "That's what makes them so frisky."

"Dosed!" cried Margaret. "I didn't suppose dosing ever made anyone frisky. What do you dose them with?"

"Caper sauce," replied the King. "Jolly little chips, aren't they?"

"They certainly are," cried Frances; and jumping down from her seat, she ran forward and caught up the youngest, intending to give him a good toss. She found him so heavy, however, that she changed her mind.

"Why! What a weight he is!" she exclaimed. "He's only about half as tall as I am, but I believe he weighs as much."

"He's made of heavy stuff," explained the King. "But we'll soon mend that. Come along, Chips, and I'll give you a treat."

Marching over to the aëro-plane fountain, the King drew the milk-strainer from his pocket, and while the little Princes all stood in a row with their mouths wide open, like young fly-catchers, he fished out half-a-dozen bubbles and with the tip of his finger flipped one down each throat in turn.

"Now," said he to Frances. "Try him again. You'll find him a good deal lighter."

## COCO BOLO

He was; the difference was surprising—very surprising indeed to Frances. For, not expecting him to be so light all of a sudden, she tossed the little Prince into the air, when, instead of coming down again, he flew out of her hands; the wind got into his blouse and his bloomers, puffing them out like balloons, and away he went, floating along about ten feet from the ground.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LOBSTERNECK

“**C**ATCH him!” shouted the King; “Catch him!” shouted the Admiral; “Catch him!” cried Margaret and Frances and the five little Princes; and all nine of them set off running as fast as they could, jumping like a flock of grasshoppers, trying to grasp the infant Prince by his ankles; while the infant Prince, himself, went sailing along backwards, laughing with glee and waving his hands to the company below, evidently enjoying himself immensely.

Where he might have blown to there is no telling, had it not been for Margaret. As she ran past the throne she espied the King’s crown still hanging to one of the gold knobs. Snatching it down, she raced after the others, and coming under the little Prince, she called out, “Here, Princy, boy! Catch this!”—at the same time throwing up the crown to him.

The effect was rather unexpected. The youngster missed the catch, but luckily Margaret had made

## COCO BOLO

such a good cast that the crown pitched over his head and settled down upon his shoulders, like a horse-collar. The little Prince instantly grasped it tight with both hands, when, being overweighted, he turned heels up and came floating down head-first to where nine pairs of hands were waiting to catch him.

“Well done!” cried His Majesty. “Very well done! Now—”

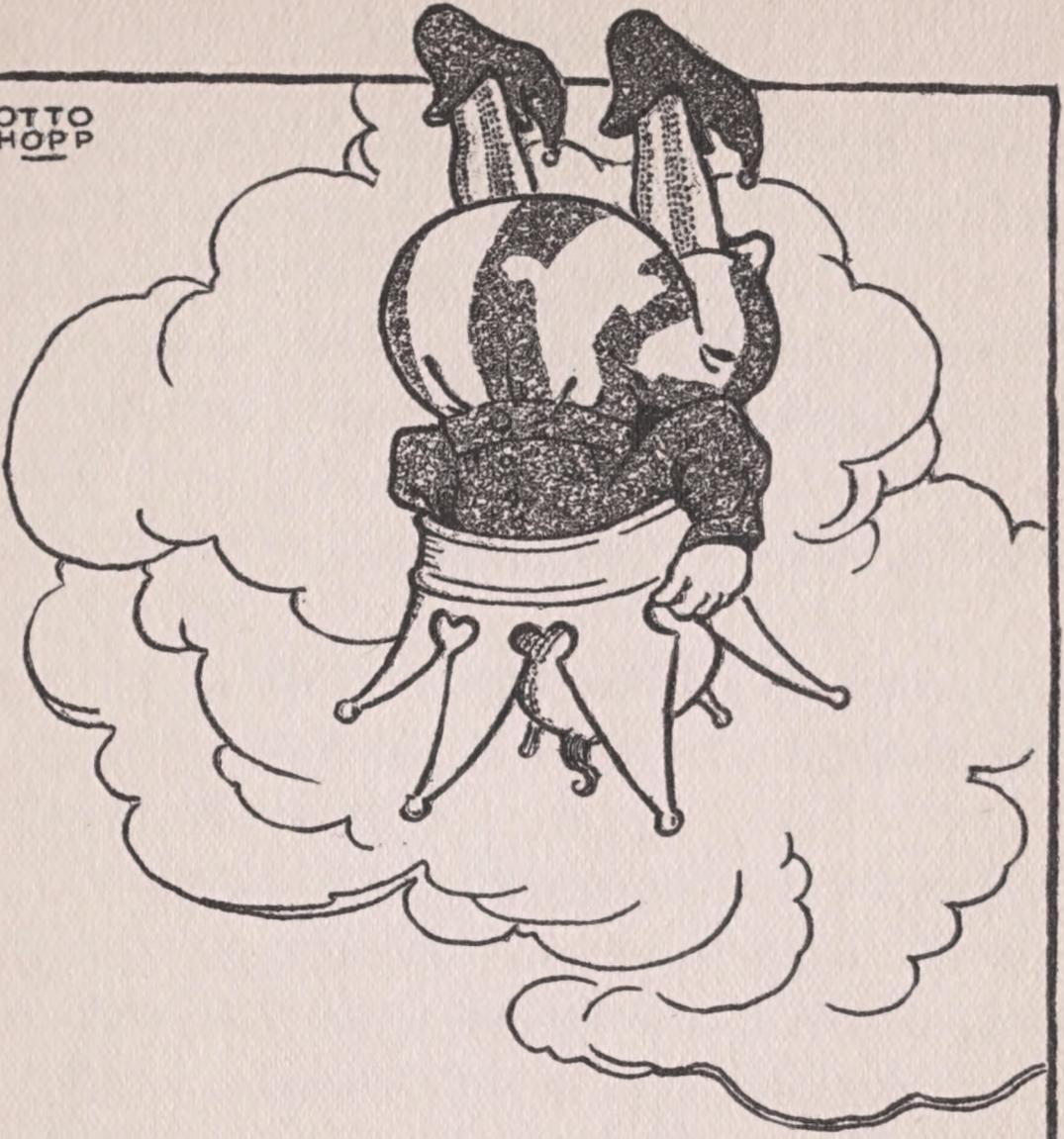
He stopped, and, holding up one finger, cocked his ears, when the two little girls, listening too, heard the *clink-clank* of the Court Crier’s bell approaching.

“Oh, bother!” exclaimed the King. “They’ve got out. That’s the way they always do. They sit down at the table and wait for dinner, and after a bit they forget what they are waiting for and they all get up and come out by the other door. They’ll be coming round the corner in a minute. Let’s run!”

Away he went, Margaret and Frances and the Admiral, each holding two of the little Princes by the hand, running after him, over the hill behind the throne and down the other side, when the first thing they came to was a sort of wood-shed containing a number of logs, each of which had a ticket tacked on it, marked, “One,” “Two,” “Three,” and so forth.

“Oh, so this is where you keep your firewood, is it?” remarked Margaret to the Admiral.

OTTO  
HOPP



*Turned heels up and came  
floating down head first* |



## LOBSTERNECK

"Firewood!" cried the Admiral, aghast. "Dear me, no! These are all family trees. Firewood! Tut! Tut! I'm glad the king didn't hear you."

"So am I," said Margaret. "It was a dreadful mistake, and I wouldn't hurt his feelings for anything. What are all the logs numbered for?"

"So that the carpenter can tell which is which. See here!"

So saying, the Admiral reached down from a nail a big book, the leaves of which were made of slabs of wood, like shingles.

"This," said he, "is the log-book, and you see each family tree is recorded on a different page. Number one: the Oak family; number two: the Maples; number three: *Lignum-Vitæ*—very aristocratic family, that; number four: my own family, the Boxwoods; and so on."

"I see. What a good idea! I suppose that is the carpenter over there, talking to the King: the little man in pink overalls and a paper cap, scratching his ear with a chisel."

"That's the carpenter. He seems to be rather puzzled about something. Let us go and see what he's making."

They found the King and the carpenter bending over a short log of wood, roughly chiseled into the

## COCO BOLO

form of a man, which lay on a pair of trestles between them. Both of them looked so serious that the little girls could not help thinking there must be something wrong.

“What is it, Rex?” asked the Admiral. “Anything the matter?”

“Matter!” cried His Majesty. “I should think there was. We’re regularly up a stump. What kind of wood do you suppose this is?”—touching the log with his foot.

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied the Admiral. “What is it? Mahogany?”

“No. I wish it were. That would be simple enough. It’s *Blue Gum!*”

“Phew!” whistled the Admiral. And then he and the King and the carpenter all took hold of their chins with one hand, stuck out their lower lips, and gazed in perplexity at the log of wood lying on the trestles.

Evidently it was a serious matter, for even the little Coco Bolos stuck out their lower lips in imitation of their elders, though why it was a serious matter Margaret and Frances could not understand. Margaret was just going to ask, when the King turned round and said:

“It’s because it’s Blue Gum, you see. Any other

## LOBSTERNECK

color would have been all right—but *Blue!* The one color we've always avoided."

"Most unlucky," remarked the Admiral. "How did it get here?"

"Floated ashore yesterday," replied the carpenter.

"You see," continued the King, "it is against the law here for anyone to look blue—and what we are going to do with this log of Blue Gum I can't think."

"Couldn't you make a policeman?" suggested Frances.

"Grand idea!" cried the King, clapping his hands. "Just the thing! Thank you ever so much. We'll have a blue policeman to chase away the 'blues', just as we have a Court Crier to do the crying. What a happy thought! Then, if anyone does forget to be cheerful and polite it shall be the policeman's duty to catch him and paint him blue, of course."

"He won't have much to do at that rate," remarked the Admiral, "for nobody has ever been painted blue yet. You'll have to give him something else to do to fill up his time, or he'll be coming down with the 'blues' himself."

"You might give him a butterfly net," suggested Margaret, "and set him to chasing blue-bottles for practice."

"That's a good idea, too," responded the King.

## COCO BOLO

“So that’s what we’ll do. Make a policeman, Carpenter, and, if you can, make one that will keep awake. Do you think that’s possible.”

“Oh, yes,” replied the carpenter. “I can fix him. I’ll give him a hollow tooth, so that he can’t breathe through his mouth without getting the toothache, and I’ll make his skin so tight that he won’t be able to shut his eyes without opening his mouth. See?”

“Very good idea,” said the King. “So, pitch in, Carpenter, and get him done as soon as you can. Hark! There’s that bell again! Come on! Run! Or they’ll find us yet.”

Away they all went again, round the corner of the wood-shed and up the hill where stood the dragon’s tower—a round, fat tower with one arched doorway and no window. The dragon, himself, was not visible, until, walking round to the other side of the tower, they espied the end of his tail hanging over the edge between two of the battlements.

“He’s taking his afternoon nap,” remarked the King. “Hi! You mouldy old reptile!” he called out. “Wake up! Here are two young ladies come to call on you!”

At this, the long, scaly tail slowly withdrew, and in its place presently appeared the dragon’s head, looking down at them. Thinking that he might feel

## LOBSTERNECK

irritable at being thus awakened from his nap, Margaret and Frances carefully got behind the King, while Periwinkle got behind *them*, but they felt reassured in a moment when they saw what a jolly old dragon he was; for his little eyes twinkled and his smile was of most genial proportions.

"How do, Ladies?" said the dragon, cordially. "Very glad to see you. I would have come down earlier to pay my respects, only it was just the time for my music lesson, so I couldn't well get away."

"No, of course not," assented Margaret, who was taking lessons on the piano herself and knew how it was. "So you take music lessons, do you? What on?"

"On purpose," replied the dragon. "Lessons in singing, with big drum and cymbals accompaniment."

"That sounds difficult," remarked Frances. "Won't you sing us something, Mr. Snap-Dragon?"

"Yes, do!" cried Margaret.

"Come on down Six-foot," said the King, encouragingly. "You needn't be bashful. Come down and show your paces."

"All right," said the dragon. "Anything to oblige."

So saying, he withdrew his head, the children could hear his scales going *clish-clash* as he slid down the

## COCO BOLO

stairs, and presently he came oozing out of the arched doorway—there seemed to be no end to him.

As he was the first dragon they had ever seen, the two little girls, of course, gazed upon him with great interest. He had a long body and a long tail and a long neck which he could draw in or stretch out like a telescope, just as he pleased; he had six feet, on each of which he was wearing his best, white-kid, company boxing-gloves; and his back was shingled all over with copper-colored scales, two of which, placed just beneath his shoulder-blades, were about the size and shape of stove-lids. These two big scales appeared to work on hinges, like the lid of a box, the reason for which arrangement the children could not at first understand.

“Now, Lobsterneck, old boy!” said the King. “Clear your pipes and get to work.”

“Very well,” replied the dragon. “What would you like first?”

“Give us a fantasia on the drum and cymbals—just to show the ladies how you do it.”

At this, the obliging old snap-dragon sat up straight, with his tail curled round his hind feet, when, with his middle pair of fists he hit himself several hard thumps on his chest, producing a sound like the beating of a big drum. At the same time, every

## LOBSTERNECK

thump on his chest caused the "stove-lid" scales on his back to fly up on their hinges and come down again with a clash, making altogether a pretty good imitation of the drum and cymbals.

"Good!" cried Frances, clapping her hands. "Isn't that clever!"

"Isn't it!" responded Margaret. "Did it take you a very long time to learn, Mr. Snap-Dragon?"

"A longish time," replied the dragon, with a sideways wag of his head. "The drum part is easy enough, of course, but I've had to spend hours and hours practising my scales."

"I should think so," said Margaret, feelingly. "Scales on the piano are difficult enough, but scales on your back must be much worse. Now, won't you please sing us a song?"

"With pleasure," replied the dragon. "What sort of a song would you like?"

"Sing something suitable to the occasion," said the King. "Something about a garden-party, and put Margaret in."

"Oh, yes, do!" cried both the little girls. "Can you? That would be nice!"

"Anything to oblige," said the dragon once more; adding, with a modest cough behind his boxing-glove, "I'll sing you a little song to a tune of my own

## COCO BOLO

decomposing.”

With that he unfolded a sheet of music, and holding it in his front paws, prepared to sing.

OTTO  
HOFF

9 9



*With that he unfolded a sheet  
of music and prepared to sing*



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SNAP-DRAGON SINGS

**W**HILE the dragon was fidgeting about, arranging and re-arranging his tail—just like a young lady with her skirts—Margaret slipped behind him to look at the music. It was the queerest music she had ever seen, for it consisted of one big, black semi-breve, after which was written, “Ad lib.”—the same as saying, “Go as you please.” On top of the sheet was written:

“Margaret’s Tea Party.  
To the tune of Michael Roy.  
Decomposed by  
Lobsterneck,  
The Great American Snap-Dragon.”

What a decomposed tune might be, Margaret did not know, though, as soon as the dragon began to sing, she saw what a simple matter it was; she felt sure she could decompose one herself. All you had

## COCO BOLO

to do, apparently, was to sing the right notes if you could remember them and to fill in with notes of your own when you couldn't.

By this time Lobsterneck had arranged his tail to his liking, so Margaret ran back and took her place with the others in front of him, when the dragon, with a preliminary shake to loosen his scales, began to sing:

“One day when Margaret went out  
To walk upon the hill,  
She saw a lovely purple duck  
Who had a yellow bill.

Said Marg'ret to the purple duck,  
'If you'll come home with me,  
I'll give you beans and buttered toast  
And sugar in your tea'.”

“Chorus!” shouted the dragon; when everybody, notwithstanding the fact that they had never heard the chorus before, pitched in and sang:

“For, Oh! For, Oh!  
We're out for a regular spree,  
And you shall have anything else you like  
If only you'll come to tea.”

## THE SNAP-DRAGON SINGS

This chorus they sang after each pair of verses,  
the rest of which were as follows:

“ ‘I’ll come,’ the purple duck replied,  
And flapped one little wing,  
And wagged her tail, she was so glad,  
And tried her best to sing.

But that was more than she could do,  
And so she merely said,  
‘Quack, quack!’ and wagged her tail again,  
And jumped about instead.

Then Marg’ret said, ‘Suppose we go  
And see what we can find.’  
So up the hill she walked again,  
The purple duck behind.

They looked behind the stones and trees,  
They looked behind the wall,  
And there they found a sky-blue crane,  
And he was very tall.

Said Marg’ret to the sky-blue crane,  
‘If you’ll come home with me,  
I’ll give you macaroni soup  
And apples with your tea.’

## COCO BOLO

'Ha, ha!' the sky-blue crane replied,  
And that was all he said,  
But on the wall he quickly jumped  
And stood upon his head.

And next they saw a chicken house,  
And Marg'ret looked inside,  
And there she found a speckled hen  
And seven chicks beside.

Said Marg'ret to the speckled hen,  
'If you'll come home with me,  
I'll give you meat and marmalade  
And spinach with your tea.'

'Cluck, cluck!' the speckled hen replied.  
'And if it won't be rude,  
I'll come to tea myself,' said she,  
'And bring my hungry brood.'

Said Marg'ret to the little chicks,  
'If you'll come home with me,  
I'll give you cakes and cream of wheat  
And malted milk for tea.'

'Peep, peep!' the little chicks replied,  
'Our throats are dry with thirst'.

## THE SNAP-DRAGON SINGS

'Then come,' said Marg'ret, 'let us run  
And see who gets there first.'

So down they ran; the sky-blue crane,  
The purple duck, and then  
The seven little thirsty chicks  
Behind the speckled hen.

The duck had beans and buttered toast  
And sugar in her tea;  
The crane had macaroni soup  
And apples, two or three.

The speckled hen had spinach, too,  
And marmalade and meat;  
The chicks had cakes and malted milk,  
As well as cream of wheat.

A splendid supper had they all,  
As much as they could wish;  
They emptied every single plate  
And cleared off every dish.

And when they'd eaten all they could,  
They stood up in a row,  
And made a bow to Margaret,  
For it was time to go.

## COCO BOLO

'We're very much obliged,' they said.

'We're very glad we came'.

The duck, the crane, the hen, the chicks,

They each one said the same.

And when they all got home again

Upon the hill so steep,

They tucked their heads beneath their wings

And quickly went to sleep.

For, Oh! For, Oh!

We're out for a regular spree,

And you shall have anything else you like

If only you'll come to tea."

At the end of the song, while everybody was applauding and crying, "Encore," the dragon, with his tail hung over his arm, waltzed round and round in a solemn manner until he was out of breath, when he sat down with his back against the tower and fanned himself with the music.

"Very good song," said the King. "Does you credit, Drum Major. Now, get your breath again and sing us another. Something about Frances this time."

"Please do," begged Frances, coming forward with Periwinkle under her arm. "Something about

## THE SNAP-DRAGON SINGS

me and Periwinkle—or is that *too* difficult?”

“Not at all,” replied Lobsterneck. “Simplest thing possible. Just a moment.”

So saying, he took his fountain pen from behind his ear, and spreading the music on the door-step of the tower, he scratched out “Margaret’s Tea Party”, and wrote instead, “Frances and the Spotted Pup.” Having done so, he sat up straight once more, tucked his pen behind his ear, thumped his chest two or three times, just to see if his scales were in tune, and began again:

“One summer day as Frances went  
A-walking up the street,  
She met a little spotted pup  
Who had a piece of meat.

Said Frances to the spotted pup,  
‘If you eat all of that,  
I greatly fear, my little Dear,  
You’ll grow a deal too fat’.”

Once more everybody joined in the chorus, though the words were almost entirely different:

“For, Oh! For, Oh!  
There surely is no question,

## COCO BOLO

That if you gobble your meals too fast  
You'll have the indigestion."

With his eye fixed on Periwinkle, as if to remind him that he was the subject of his song, the dragon went on:

"The spotted pup, he shut one eye  
And gave a little squeak.  
He could not talk, because his mouth  
Was much too full to speak.

And then that foolish spotted pup—  
I wonder he could do it—  
He swallowed that great piece of meat  
And never thought to chew it.

At first it tasted very good,  
But pretty soon he cried:  
'Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I greatly fear  
I have a pain inside.

I quite forgot to chew my food—  
I won't forget again.  
Boo-hoo! Boo-hoo! What shall I do?  
I have a dreadful pain!

When Frances saw the tears run down—  
They made a little pool—

## THE SNAP-DRAGON SINGS

She lifted up the spotted pup  
And set him on a stool.

'Sit there', said she, 'I won't be long'.  
The puppy cried, 'Alack!'  
But Frances said, 'Be patient, now,  
I'll very soon be back.'

Away she ran, and back she came,  
She wasn't gone a minute.  
She had a bottle in her hand,  
And there was something in it.

'Take this,' said she, 'and you will be  
Much better very soon.'  
And then she gave him pepsin in  
A large-sized table-spoon.

And pretty soon, as Frances said,  
The pain had gone away.  
'Bow-wow! Bow-wow! I'm better now,'  
The spotted pup did say.

And then by every means he knew,  
By voice and attitude,  
The spotted puppy did his best  
To show his gratitude.

## COCO BOLO

So Frances patted him, and said:

‘Now, don’t forget again  
To chew your dinner, or you’ll have  
Another dreadful pain.’

‘I won’t,’ said he. ‘Whate’er it be:

Oatmeal or soup or suet,  
I never will forget again  
To chew and chew and chew it.’

For, Oh! For, Oh!

There surely is no question,  
That if you gobble your meals too fast  
You’ll have the indigestion.”

## CHAPTER X

### THE ARCHBISHOP

**H**ARDLY had they finished the last chorus, when they heard once more the clank of the Court Crier's bell, and there were the Court Crier, himself, and all the courtiers running up the hill to join them.

The King turned to fly, when Lobsterneck, with a sudden snort, straightened himself up, and stretching out his long neck, began sniffing the breeze.

"What is it, Six-foot?" asked Coco Bolo.

Without waiting to reply, the dragon bolted into his tower and up the stairway, when, no sooner had he reached the top than he clapped his fore-paws to his mouth and began bellowing like a cow. At the very first bellow all the dog-fish down in the bay began to bark, while Periwinkle, excitedly jumping about, joined in the chorus, though he had not the least idea what he was barking about.

"What is it, Lobsterneck?" shouted the King.  
"Who's coming?"

"Can't tell yet," the dragon shouted back. "All I

## COCO BOLO

can see is the upper half of a mast with a big gray cat sitting on top of it."

"A cat!" cried the King. "Then it must be the Archbishop."

"The Archbishop of Timbuctoo-and-a-half?" asked Margaret.

"Yes, the Archbishop of Timbuctoo-and-a-half. He promised to drop in to-day. He's cruising around on his private raft."

"That's who it is!" cried the dragon, leaning over the edge of the tower and calling down to the King. "I can see him now. He's just come through the cloud-wall. Hooray, for the Archbishop of Timbuctoo-and-a-half!"

With that, the enthusiastic Lobsterneck dived head-first down his staircase, with a clash as though someone had flung a shovelful of tenpenny nails on a stone pavement, bolted out of the arched doorway, and galloped off down the hill toward the beach to welcome the Archbishop.

"Come on!" shouted the King; and away he went, himself, down the hill, followed by Margaret and Frances, the little Coco Bolos, the Admiral, the Court Crier and all the courtiers, everyone of them running so fast that stumpy-legged Periwinkle, the only one who had not had any aëro-plane water, was

## THE ARCHBISHOP

the last in the race.

As soon as they arrived at the pier, they saw the raft slowly approaching, escorted on all sides by the whole pack of dog-fish. It was a trim and well built raft, about as big as a bedroom floor, with a mast in the middle, to which was attached a square sail, blown out tight by the wind. On top of the mast, having evidently been scared up there by the barking of the dog-fish, sat a big gray cat; while in front of the sail, holding his crozier in one hand and kissing the other to the people ashore stood the Archbishop, himself.

To Margaret and Frances, who had never seen one before, an Archbishop was almost as much of a curiosity as a snap-dragon. At the same time, however, they had formed in their own minds a sort of picture of what an Archbishop would be like, expecting to find him a dignified old gentleman, dressed in black, with a bald head, a long white beard, and most probably wearing a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles.

What was their surprise, therefore, when, as the raft drew near, they saw that the Archbishop of Timbuctoo-and-a-half was not by any means the kind of person they had imagined. He was a jaunty young gentleman with a neat little black moustache; instead of gold-rimmed spectacles, he wore in his right eye

## COCO BOLO

an eyeglass which he kept in place with difficulty by screwing up one corner of his mouth; on his shoulders, concealing all but his white silk stockings and red shoes, he wore a purple cloak embroidered all over with gold lace; while, most noticeable of all, on his head was an archbishop's mitre of ample size and antique design.

Slowly the raft glided forward, until it presently bumped gently against the pier, when the frisky Archbishop, using his crozier as a jumping pole, leaped lightly upon the steps, and running up them with hand extended, he cried:

"Well, Coco, how goes it? How are you, old block; and how are all the little chips? All cheerful and smiling as usual? Ah!"—catching sight of the two little girls—"You have guests, I see. Won't you present me?"

"With pleasure," replied the King. "Ladies, let me present the Archbishop of Timbuctoo-and-a-half. Archbishop, these are my friends, Margaret and Frances, who have done me the honor to come to my garden-party. And talking of garden-parties," he continued, "come along up to the palace and have some refreshment. Bring your cat, too. I expect he's hungry. What's his name?"

"Thomas A'Becket," replied the Archbishop.



*He was a jaunty young gentleman*



## THE ARCHBISHOP

“Come on, Thomas!” he called to the cat. “Come and have some milk.”

But Thomas A’Becket declined. He looked at the Archbishop, but he stayed where he was.

“He’s a little out of sorts today,” remarked the Archbishop, “and if he has made up his mind to stay up there, it’s no use trying to make him come down.”

“Isn’t it, though!” cried the dragon, hastily pulling off his boxing-gloves. “Just you wait a minute. I’ll make him.”

“Hallo, Lobsterneck!” exclaimed the Archbishop, giving the dragon a friendly tap on the head with his crozier. “You’re here, are you? Glad to see you again, old gargoyle. So you think you can make Thomas A’Becket come down, do you? All right. Go ahead, and let’s see how you do it.”

“I’ll show you, Archbishop,” replied Lobsterneck. “Ill fetch him down all right—never you fear.”

Standing on the pier, the dragon stretched out his long neck and tried to pick the cat off the top of the mast with his teeth. He could not quite reach him, however, so—forgetting what a rickety sort of thing a raft is—he gathered his six feet under him and jumped aboard.

Greatly to his astonishment, the raft instantly tilted up, the mast came over and hit him a severe

## COCO BOLO

crack on the crown of his head, and the next thing he knew he was down at the bottom of the sea with all the dog-fish worrying and snapping at him—though this was a matter of small consequence, for Lobsterneck was so well shingled that the dog-fishes' teeth could make no impression.

A moment later, snorting and spluttering, up bobbed Lobsterneck again, with half-a-dozen of the biggest dog-fish holding on to his tail, while all the rest, leaping out of the water, turned somersaults in the air and barked encouragement.

Instead of climbing up the steps of the pier again, so confused was the amiable old snap-dragon by the worrying and the barking and the splashing of the dog-fish, that he made straight for the shore, when, having shaken himself free of his tormentors, he galloped off home to his tower, upon the top of which he presently reappeared, seated on his three-legged stool, drying his scales with his pocket handkerchief.

But though Lobsterneck's plan for getting Thomas A'Becket ashore had not turned out exactly as he had intended, it had nevertheless proved entirely successful, for when the raft tilted up and the mast hit the dragon such a crack on the top of his head, the reluctant cat was sent flying through the air, landing on the pier so close to Periwinkle that they almost

## THE ARCHBISHOP

bumped noses.

Periwinkle, himself, strange to say, did not notice the sudden arrival of the Archbishop's cat. With his head in the air and his eyes shut tight, he was barking and barking and barking, having the very best time he ever remembered, when, all of a sudden something sharp stuck into his nose. With a yelp of astonishment, he leaped backwards and opened his eyes, to see standing before him the angry Thomas A'Becket, who, with arched back and distended tail, swore sharply at the unoffending puppy.

"Oh!" cried everybody, throwing up their hands in dismay; for such a dreadful breach of the laws had *never* happened before.

"Be cheerful," said law number one; and here was a cat just as angry as a cat could be.

"Be polite," said law number two; and here was a cat using language—Tut! Tut! And an archbishop's cat, too. Just think of that! If it had been a curate's cat, or even a vicar's—but, an archbishop's cat! No wonder the poor Archbishop covered his face with his hand and blushed purple with embarrassment.

For a full half-minute everyone stood speechless, with hands held up and eyes and mouths wide open, until suddenly the Court Crier, who was the first

## COCO BOLO

to recover, began ringing his bell and shouting, "Blue paint! Blue paint!" as loud as he could.

Upon this, everybody else shouted, "Blue paint!"—the King and the Admiral and the little Coco Bolos, as well; though Margaret and Frances felt sure that half of them, at least, had no idea what they meant by it, especially as they kept on shouting, "Blue paint!" without ever thinking, seemingly, that it was anybody's business to go and get it.

The only one who seemed to be quite unconcerned was the one who had caused all the rumpus: Thomas A'Becket, himself. Calmly seated on the pier, he proceeded to wash his face with his paws, paying no attention at all to the King and his courtiers, who, standing in a circle around him, continued to shout, "Blue paint!" without intermission.

How long they might have gone on shouting there is no knowing, had not Margaret interfered. Losing patience, she stepped up to the King, and clapping her hand over his mouth just as he had opened it for another shout—the King almost exploded at being so suddenly "corked"—she stooped and called into his ear:

"Why don't you send for your new policeman?"

Coco Bolo, with his eyes turned up, waited till Margaret removed her hand, when he took off his

## THE ARCHBISHOP

crown with a flourish, and bowing politely, said:

“That’s a capital idea of yours. Why didn’t I think of it before?”

So saying, he clapped his crown upon his head again and set off running up the middle of the pier, shouting, “Police!” at the top of his voice.

Not a single one of the courtiers had the least idea that there was any such thing as a policeman on the island, but they were a well-trained company, and knowing that the first duty of a courtier is to do as the King does, they all set off running, too, shouting, “Police! Police! Police!”

Just as they got clear of the pier and had started up the hill to the carpenter’s shop, round the end of the shop, itself, came the new policeman, running as fast as he could, with a butterfly net in one hand and a pot of blue paint in the other; while behind him ran the carpenter, a gimlet in his right hand and a hollow tooth in his left, calling out, “Hi! Hi! Come back! You’re not finished yet!”

The policeman, however, took no notice—perhaps he thought he could get along well enough without a hollow tooth. Down the hill he came, ran along the pier to where Thomas A’Becket still sat washing his face, and made a scoop at the cat with the butterfly net.

## COCO BOLO

But Thomas A'Becket was not the sort of cat to be caught quite so easily as that. He just popped between the policeman's legs and came racing up the pier, when those wooden-headed courtiers, instead of heading him off, got out of his way and allowed him to pass.

Away he went, straight for the palace, the policeman behind him and everybody else behind the policeman, until they came to the tea-garden, and there Thomas A'Becket vanished from sight.

OT TO  
HOPP



*Away he went, straight for  
the palace*



## CHAPTER XI

### THE BLUE-GUM POLICEMAN

“**H**E’S hiding somewhere,” whispered the King. “Look out, everybody, or he’ll be jumping out suddenly!”

At this suggestion, all the court ladies, with delicate squeals, jumped upon the marble-topped tables and held their petticoats tight around them, while the policeman and the Court Crier and the Admiral and the courtiers ran up and down, peeping under the chairs and behind the bushes and flower-pots in search of Thomas A’Becket.

Meanwhile, Margaret and Frances and Coco Bolo—the little Coco Bolos having been sent back to the nursery—went and sat down on the throne to rest, perceiving which, the Archbishop, thinking he would like to sit down, too, advanced towards them, dragging a chair behind him.

At this moment, Periwinkle, who, as usual, was the last to arrive, came running to jump into Frances’ lap, when, passing in front of the King’s seat, he sud-

## COCO BOLO

denly stopped and began to growl.

“What are *you* growling at?” asked Coco Bolo; and leaning forward, he peeped under the throne, when out bounced Thomas A’Becket right under his nose!

“There he goes!” cried the King, and springing out of his seat, he gave chase.

At the same moment, the Archbishop, letting go his chair, rushed forward, when, as neither of them looked where he was going, they banged their heads together and went over backwards on the grass, where they both sat with their feet straight out in front of them, staring blankly at each other.

The shock of the collision knocked off the Archbishop’s mitre and sent it rolling along the ground right in front of Thomas A’Becket, who, seeing what a good hiding-place it would make, popped into it and curled himself up inside.

It was all done so quickly that nobody noticed what had become of the cat except the two little girls, who, jumping down from their seats, ran and picked up the mitre with Thomas A’Becket inside it. Tying the strings together, they carried it between them to the throne and there hung it up on the highest of the gold-knobs at the back of the King’s seat.

“Keep quiet, Thomas A’Becket,” whispered Mar-

## THE BLUE-GUM POLICEMAN

garet, standing on tiptoe on the arm of the seat and peeping into the mitre. "Keep quiet, and you'll be all safe."

"Pur-r-r!" replied Thomas A'Becket, who was really a very nice cat when he was treated with proper respect.

Margaret and Frances then jumped down again, and running to where the King and the Archbishop still sat on the grass, rubbing their heads and staring at each other, they stretched out their hands and pulled them both to their feet again.

"Where's my mitre?" asked the Archbishop, looking all about on the ground. "Oh, it's up there, is it? Did *you* hang it up? Thank you, ever so much. I'm glad to be rid of it: it's precious heavy and uncomfortable."

"Mitres and crowns *are* heavy," assented Coco Bolo. "That's the worst of being somebody of importance. But it's no reason why we shouldn't have some refreshment, all the same. So, sit down here at this table, and we'll all have some cookies and aëro-plane water."

"Thank you," said Margaret. "But, if you don't mind, we should like some milk instead. We're a little afraid of the aëro-plane water."

"Very well," said the King, graciously. "And

## COCO BOLO

here's a saucerful for Periwinkle. If that foolish cat had only behaved himself he might have had some, too."

"Mi-ow!" said Thomas A'Becket in a plaintive tone, his voice sounding so muffled and indistinct that neither the King nor the Archbishop could tell which direction it came from. They both jumped up and looked under their chairs, but, of course, there was no cat there, so they sat down again.

They had hardly settled themselves in their chairs once more, when the policeman and the Court Crier and the Admiral and the courtiers all came back to say that Thomas A'Becket could not be found.

"What's to be done, then?" asked the King. "What's the law in the case, Policeman?"

"How should I know?" asked the policeman.

"Why, that's your business. You're the guardian of the law, aren't you?"

"I suppose I am," replied the policeman. "But if there are only two laws to guard, and if neither of them fits the case, what are you going to do?"

"Why! Make one that will fit, of course," retorted His Majesty. "Anyone but a blue-gum policeman would know that!"

"Oh, very well, then," said the blue-gum policeman; and straightening himself up, he announced in

## THE BLUE-GUM POLICEMAN

a loud voice: "Law number three: Any Archbishop whose cat swears in public shall be put in the corner and painted blue."

"That's rubbish," said Margaret. "It wasn't the Archbishop's fault."

"No," added Frances. "And I don't think it's fair to punish a cat or an archbishop either for breaking laws they never heard of—especially a law that was not made till afterwards."

"Sorry," replied the King, with a shake of his head, "but it can't be helped. I'd be glad to let him off, but the law's the law, you know. It makes me weep, Archbishop"—here the King paused and winked at the Court Crier, who hastily snatched a pocket handkerchief out of his caddy-box and shed one tear—"It makes me weep, as you see, Archbishop, but I'm afraid you'll have to be painted blue."

"Blue paint! Blue paint!" shouted all the courtiers.

"Look here!" cried the Archbishop, rising from his chair and rapping his knuckles on the table. "How can anyone think with such a racket going on? Look here, Coco Bolo!" he continued, when the noise had subsided. "This new policeman of yours has never had any lessons in painting, has he? Well, I object to having any brand-new, blue-gum police-

## COCO BOLO

man trying experiments on *me*. I'm the Archbishop of Timbuctoo-and-a-half, am I not? Well—Gracious, goodness!—whoever heard of an archbishop being painted by any but a first-rate artist? It's ridiculous! Perfectly ridiculous! If you want your policeman to practice on somebody, let him practice on the cat. Thomas A'Becket is the one who broke the law first—well, then, paint Thomas A'Becket first!"

This sounded so much like good sense that Margaret and Frances clapped their hands; whereupon, all the courtiers, who had just opened their mouths to shout, "Blue paint!" again, changed their minds and clapped their hands instead.

As for Coco Bolo, he looked puzzled. He tilted his crown over his eye while he scratched his head, and then of a sudden he set it straight again, and jumping out of his chair, he cried:

"I'll tell you what! Look here! Thomas A'Becket is hiding somewhere close by, because we heard him mew just now; so, this is what we'll do. We'll lay a trap for him. We'll set out a saucer of milk on the table and then we'll all go and hide in the bushes and wait for him to come out."

It was a pretty good idea—considering what a thick and solid head the King had, it was a very good idea.

## THE BLUE-GUM POLICEMAN

The saucer was filled, when everybody went tiptoeing away; Margaret and Frances and Coco Bolo and the Archbishop going and hiding behind the throne.

All was silent, when the little girls, peeping round the end of the throne, saw Thomas A'Becket climb out of the mitre, jump down upon the seat and go walking across the lawn towards the table.

"Look out, Thomas!" whispered Margaret. "Look out, or they'll catch you!"

The old cat turned his head and shut one eye, as much as to say, "Don't you worry," and walked on, until, having reached the table, he jumped upon it, and settling himself comfortably with his fore-paws tucked under his chest, he began lapping up the milk.

Two seconds later, out from behind a bush stepped the blue-gum policeman, butterfly net, paint-pot and all, while from behind every other bush and flower-pot came all the courtiers, with their shoulders up to their ears and their elbows stuck out, walking on tiptoe towards the table.

"Come on, now, and see the fun," whispered Coco Bolo, leading the way round to the front of the throne, where they all stood watching and waiting to see what was to happen next.

The policeman and the courtiers had crept up close to the table; the former already had his but-

## COCO BOLO

terfly net extended at arm's length to clap it down over Thomas A'Becket; it seemed as though the cat would surely be caught this time, when suddenly a brilliant idea popped into Margaret's head. Jumping into the seat of the throne, she clapped her hands to her mouth and shouted:

"DINNER!"

It was like magic! Thomas A'Becket was completely forgotten in an instant. The whole company, policeman and all, with the Admiral behind them, went racing up the center pathway to the dining-hall; while the jovial little King—who really had no desire to see Thomas A'Becket painted blue—the King, in ecstasies at the success of the trick, flung his crown upon the grass, and went stamping about, laughing so hard that the tears ran out of his eyes.

"Run, now!" he cried, as soon as he could get his breath. "Run, Archbishop, and get aboard your raft! The door is locked up there and they'll all be back in a minute."

"Here's your hat, Archbishop," said Margaret, springing upon the arm of the throne and reaching down the mitre. "And, if you don't mind, I think we'll come with you. It's time for us to go, anyhow."

"I think you had better," agreed the King.

## THE BLUE-GUM POLICEMAN

“There’s no accounting for a blue-gum policeman: he might be wanting to paint *you* next. So, if I were you, I’d take passage on the Archbishop’s raft and skip out at once. Sorry to have you go, but I think you’d better. See! here they come! Good-bye!”—shaking hands hastily—“Good-bye. Call again!”

In fact, having discovered, by the simple process of banging their noses against it, that the door was locked, the courtiers had all turned round, and shouting, “Blue paint! Blue paint!” with all their spare breath, were racing down the pathway again, when Margaret and Frances and the Archbishop, followed by Periwinkle and Thomas A’Becket, set off running for the pier.

Leaping aboard the raft, they untied it, spread the sail, and amid the shouting of the courtiers, the ringing of the Court Crier’s bell, the bellowing of the snap-dragon and the barking of the dog-fish, away they sailed and soon were lost to sight in the cloud-wall.

On they went, softly sailing along through the mist, expecting every moment to come out on the other side. But the cloud-wall must have been ever so much thicker than it was when they arrived, for they kept sailing on and on and on, long after the last of the dog-fish had ceased to bark and long after

## COCO BOLO

the dragon had given up bellowing.

It was easy, slow, drowsy sort of travelling, and presently Frances, stifling a yawn with difficulty, remarked:

“I feel rather tired. I think I’ll sit down a bit and rest.”

“I think I will, too,” responded Margaret, covering her mouth with both hands.

“So will I,” added the Archbishop, with a yawn so tremendous that he had to hold his mitre in front of his face to hide it.

Down they sat, therefore, with their backs against the mast, and as was to be expected, in two seconds they were all sound asleep—Periwinkle and Thomas A’Becket as well.

How long they had been sailing, the children never could tell, when suddenly, “*Clink- clank!*” went the Court Crier’s bell, somewhere close by.

Margaret woke up with a start, clutching her sister by the arm, and then for several seconds she stared about her, wondering where she was.

Nor was it surprising that she should sit and stare, for, when at length she did recognize her surroundings, she found herself beneath the trees by the sea-shore where she and Frances had lain down to rest after their vain pursuit of their shadows that morn-

OTTO  
HOPP



*Nor was it surprising that  
she should sit and stare*



## THE BLUE-GUM POLICEMAN

ing.

There, too, sat Frances, bolt upright, blinking and gazing about her in a bewildered manner; and there too, lay Periwinkle, flat on his side, his beady black eyes wide open and his red worsted smile fixed and immovable—a yellow plush puppy once more.

Again the bell sounded. Margaret looked hastily behind her, and there was old Daphne, the milk-cow, quietly feeding, the bell about her neck going “*Clink-clank,*” at every motion.

At the same moment, from far across the ocean came a melancholly “Hoo-oo! Hoo-oo!”

“Hark, Frances! Hark!” cried Margaret. “Did you hear it? There’s the poor old dragon bellowing. Somebody else must have arrived. Oh, what an adventure we’ve had! Come along! Let’s run home and tell Daddy! Won’t he be glad to hear that there *is* a King Coco Bolo and a Great American Snap-Dragon and an Archbishop and a Floating Island and everything!”

“Won’t he!” said Frances, as they set off homeward hand in hand.





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